JEWISH EDUCATION IN INDIANAPOLIS THROUGH 1985

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Submitted to the faculty of the University Graduate School
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree
Master of Arts
in the Department of History,
Indiana University

December 2005

Accepted by the Faculty of Indiana University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Master's Thesis
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To my parents.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the members of my thesis committee, professors Robert Barrows, Nancy Robertson, and Kevin Cramer, for sharing their time and expertise. Professor Barrows' insightful comments and suggestions improved this thesis immeasurably, and his keen eye for details thankfully reinforced the perfectionist within me. Beyond my thesis committee, additional IUPUI history department faculty members also contributed to this thesis as the earliest iterations crossed their desks during my initial years of course work; therefore my thanks also go to professors Elizabeth Brand Monroe, Annie Coleman, Philip Scarpino, and the late Scott Seregny. I will always have fond memories of enlightening class discussions with Professor Seregny, who was an original member of my thesis committee; he was excited by my potential research on the dynamic relationships that emerged with the arrival of Soviet Jews to Indianapolis, and I was looking forward to exploring those issues with him. Original due must go to the faculty and staff of the IU-Bloomington Jewish Studies Program, including professors Benjamin Nathans, Derek Penslar, Irving Katz, Alvin Rosenfeld, John Efron, Steven Weitzman, and Carolyn Lipson-Walker, who inspired and deepened my love of Jewish history with every course I took.

The initial challenge of locating materials and documents from schools and synagogues was met by the support of directors, administrators, librarians, and rabbis at each of the institutions I researched. I offer my thanks to Ora Leivant, the executive director of the Bureau of Jewish Education, Marcy Ekhaus, administrator of the Hasten Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis, and George Kelley, education director at Congregational Beth-El Zedeck, each of whom welcomed me into their space and opened

their closets and files for me to explore. At the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation, I extend my thanks to Loni McKown and Noraleen Young for their work in accessioning the IHC archives, making the congregation's rich history accessible to historians and congregants alike for generations to come, as well as to the IHC librarian, Evelyn Pockrass, and IHC's director of lifelong learning, Marcia Goldstein. The wealth of material available on the Indiana Jewish experience at the Indiana Historical Society, particularly the collection of the Indiana Jewish Historical Society, is truly a gift to historians, as well as the generally curious; the work of Paul Brockman, archivist for Jewish related materials at the Indiana Historical Society, will benefit generations of researchers in numerous fields of study. Thankfully, every minute I spent researching at the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati was productive because of the efforts and attention given to me from chief archivist Kevin Proffitt, as well as archival assistant Camille Servizzi.

Over the past few years many friends encouraged me. I want to thank Dana Rasis Brittan for helping me to focus my efforts at significant moments over the life of this project, as well as Shana Canter Levin and Laura Engel for their steadfast confidence in me. The support from graduate school colleagues is unique and so critical in that we all share in experiencing the trials of completing a task such as this; I am thankful for the friendship of Eloise Scroggins, Malia Savarino, Erin Kelley, and Tina Baich, who not only listened to me, but also made sure I maintained the necessary social contact to stay grounded throughout the process. Over the last several months of writing, Beryl Cohen generously devoted much of her time to reading and editing chapter drafts. Throughout the last ten years of my collegiate and graduate education, the guidance, insight, and love

from my dear friend and mentor, Rachel Barkan, infused me with the confidence and perspective to meet the challenges and embrace the rewards of conducting academic research. My sisters, Debra Barton Grant and Jennifer Barton Lutz have supported me unceasingly, understanding my time limitations and being patient for the day when I would "resurface" to enjoy time with my beautiful nieces and nephews once again. My loving husband, Jason, spent countless hours listening to me, supporting me during many moments of frustration, and expressing pride at every hurdle overcome. My parents, Sandra and Douglas Barton, have long anticipated the completion of this project. I dedicate this thesis to them, in gratitude for thirty years of love, guidance, encouragement, sustenance, support, and unswerving confidence. I know the completion of this degree will make them proud, but not nearly as proud as I am to know them as my parents.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

He who does not increase his knowledge, decreases it. He who learns not, forfeits his life.
Say not: When I have time I will study because you may never have the time.
If a man has acquired a good name he has gained something which enriches himself;
but if he has acquired words of the Torah he has attained afterlife.
– Rabbi Hillel[1]

Few could argue with statements that assert that Jewish education is a central motif throughout Jewish history, that the provision of it is a profound responsibility, and that the reception of it is central to shaping an individual's Jewish identity. The biblical commandment "to teach them diligently to your children" and the volumes of rabbinic commentary that exalt the learning of Torah as the pinnacle of Jewish existence – even equal to all commandments combined – have been heeded by hundreds of generations of Jews, and have created the foundation of the major force that has secured Jewish survival for over 5,000 years.[2] This thesis explores how Jews in Indianapolis interpreted and fulfilled this biblical injunction in the religious schools they established over the last 150 years, and constitutes the only in-depth examination of the history of Jewish education in Indianapolis.

Continuity and change are two ideas often considered together when attempting to find the appropriate lens through which to understand a series of past events or circumstances. Jews throughout time have been centrally concerned with their survival

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[1] Rabbi Hillel, *Pirkei Avot*, Chapter 1:13, Chapter 2:5, Chapter 2:8. Rabbi Hillel was a Jewish scholar and theologian who lived from approximately 30 BCE to 9 CE. *Pirkei Avot*, the Ethics of the Fathers, is considered one of the most accessible books of the Oral Law (compiled in the second century, the *Mishnah* and *Talmud* are legal commentary on the Written Law, also known as *Torah* or Bible) and consists of moral, ethical, and philosophical teachings of rabbinic sages over a period of 500 years. See: Joseph Telushkin, *Jewish Literacy: The Most Important Things to Know About the Jewish Religion, Its People and Its History* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1991); http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org; http://www.ou.org/about/judaism/np.htm.

[2] Deuteronomy 6:7.

as a group with respect to religion, nationality, culture, and community. Jeopardizing that survival are threats from without (the host society's persecution of Jews), or from within (with the rise of modernity, Jewish individuals could choose how or whether to be Jewish). In either scenario, Jews have regarded study and education as indispensable to maintaining Jewish existence because the transmission of Jewish beliefs, texts, customs, and history places the student squarely within the community of Jews, both past and present. A pervasive alarmist mentality dictates that successful Jewish education is the only guarantor of Jewish survival and continuity.

While recognizing that the critical nature of Jewish education has been a constant, the provider of Jewish education has changed and its primacy has shifted. With the political emancipation of European Jews in the late eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth century, many Jews embraced the opportunity to acculturate into the greater society and became proficient in secular fields of study. Once Jews were permitted to study in secular schools, the need for supplementary forms of Jewish education increased.[3] As a result of "being a Jew at home and a citizen on the streets," religious observance decreased, and religious schools were left with the task of teaching children the "how-to's" of being Jewish. Although the study of the laws of Torah (Hebrew Bible) and its commentaries has been a consistent focus of Jewish education throughout Jewish history, the curricula of Jewish schools in America necessarily expanded to include prayers, holidays, life cycle events, history, culture, Israel, current events, the Hebrew language, and notably, how to be Jewish in a non-Jewish world.

Jewish schools in Indianapolis changed over time and differed from each other with respect to pedagogical approach, curricular emphasis, physical location, and

[3] Dan Cohn-Sherbock, *The Jewish Faith* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1993): 140.

students served.[4] The type of education pursued and provided was not only shaped by the calibration of these factors, but also by the perspective of the particular group that sponsored the educational program, and the impact of national and international events. These events included the rise of the public school system from the 1860s through the 1880s; nativism in the 1880s and 1920s; the calls for cultural pluralism from the 1920s through the 1960s; the profound impact of the Holocaust and the birth of the State of Israel; the trends of suburbanization in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s; the wars in Israel; and the civil rights and Soviet Jewry movements in the 1960s and 1970s. While all of these events will be considered for their effect on the course of Jewish education, the thrust of the thesis will involve an examination of the distinctions between denominations of Judaism as they pertain to Jewish education, the development of religious schools and educational programs established by individual congregations, and the philanthropic and educational role of the Jewish community as a whole. The story of Jewish education is a reflection of not only the community's concerns and priorities, but also the dynamic inter-group relationships that existed between immigrants and established Jews, and between the synagogues and the Jewish Federation of Indianapolis.

During the process of acculturation, every immigrant crossed over from "newcomer" to "American" regardless of his or her place of origin, language, or level of religiosity. Education was (and remains) central to this process. However, educational programs created by the American Jewish community for Jewish youth had two major thrusts: 1) to teach knowledge of the Jewish faith and practices, and 2) to educate Jews

[4] Outside classrooms, "informal" types of Jewish education have become overwhelmingly popular, and many argue are more effective at cementing Jewish identity. These include summer camps, youth groups, Israel experiences, and early childhood and adult education. A detailed look at these programs are beyond the scope of this thesis, which focuses on elementary-level religious schools, but constitute a significant segment of the Jewish education spectrum.

how to be American citizens of the Jewish faith. These two goals of education existed – sometimes simultaneously, and more often separately – in the classrooms of Jewish schools in Indianapolis. The tension between "Americanization" and "Judaization" as guiding principles directing Jewish education constitute a consistent theme throughout this thesis.

Scholars of the American Jewish experience have never been short on words or ways to examine how Jews and Judaism have managed to persist on American soil for 350 years. Whether history, sociology, philosophy, or demography, every academic approach must take into account the issues of acculturation and assimilation; there is no American Jewish experience devoid of this consideration because the story of Jews in America is ultimately that of the tension between accommodation and maintaining some substance of Jewish heritage, and how each subsequent generation dealt with this tension differently. The historiography of Jewish education in America includes works representing each of the above disciplines. Scholars have examined the breadth of issues from the details of administration oversight, enrollment trends, and curricular developments, to broader considerations including debates over communal versus denominational sponsorship, the intensity level of programs, and whether Jewish education is ultimately successful in creating Jewish youth with a strong Jewish identity. Throughout the thesis are specific references to the work and insight of researchers dealing with all of these issues.

One can read almost any book or journal on American Jewish history and find a chapter or article dealing with Jewish education. Most scholars place these discussions against the trends toward accommodation, and inevitably come to recognize that the more

acculturated Jews became, the more organized they became communally, and subsequently more options for Jewish education emerged. Just as nearly every examination of the American Jewish experience includes a look at Jewish education, nearly every treatment of Jewish education addresses the fateful impact that the emergence of public schools had on the development of Jewish education in the United States. The decision by Jewish immigrants to fully embrace public schools (because nonsectarian public education was recognized as the path to upward mobility and key to societal acceptance) completely and forever altered the role of religious training. For the first time in Jewish history, religious learning was relegated subservient to secular learning.

Historians Judah Pilch and Meir Ben-Horin edited two books that, together, constitute the most comprehensive history of Jewish education and detailed presentation of the whole range of Jewish educational theory. *Judaism and the Jewish School* and *A History of Jewish Education in America* include over fifty articles and chapter contributions from educators and historians who comprise the most noteworthy figures in shaping the structure and intent of Jewish education during the first half of the twentieth century.[5] Several historians have examined the expanding role of the synagogue, embedded into which are considerations of the congregational school, which operated on Sunday and/or in the afternoon during the week. Alan Silverstein describes the emergence of the "Sabbath School" in the mid-nineteenth century and shows how the

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[5] Judah Pilch and Meir Ben-Horin, eds., *Judaism and the Jewish School: Selected Essays on the Direction and Purpose of Jewish Education* (New York: American Association for Jewish Education, 1966), includes articles written by Salo Baron, Israel Friedlander, Samson Benderly, Isaac Berkson, Alexander Dushkin, Emanuel Gamoran, Leo Honor, Horace Kallen, Solomon Schechter, Samuel Dinin, and Mordecai Kaplan. Judah Pilch, ed., *A History of Jewish Education in America* (New York: National Curriculum Research Institute of the American Association for Jewish Education, 1969), includes contributions by Meir Ben-Horin, Judah Pilch, Uriah Zvi Engelman, and Jack Cohen.

Reform movement's congregational religious school changed to meet the challenges of assimilation.[6] David Kaufman examines the development of Jewish communal life in America from 1875 to 1925 through the relationship between the synagogue and the "Jewish Center," which he defines as "any institution whose program merges the religious, the educational, and the social."[7] Barry Chazan asserts that the story of Jewish education from the mid-1960s until the late 1980s is ultimately about the dismantling of the congregational supplementary school and its "recreation" in two new forms: the new supplemental school (whose focus was no longer the challenge of accommodating Jewishness and Americanism, but rather the struggle to create "Jewish identity and consciousness") and the new day school.[8]

Similar to the trends in general historiography of women, exploring the role of Jewish women gained momentum in the 1970s and 1980s. Although there seems to be a gap in that there are no considerations that primarily address women's activities as educators, the following books investigate the increasing role of women in various aspects of the American Jewish religious, social, and educational community. Three of the earliest historians of American Jewish women came together in 1976 to describe the experiences of some women during the course of Jewish settlement in America from the 1840s to the mid-1970s. Karla Goldman focused on how women expanded their spheres of activity in the synagogue throughout the nineteenth century; Faith Rogow examined the National Council of Jewish Women from its founding in 1893 through the early

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[6] Alan Silverstein, *Alternatives to Assimilation: The Response of Reform Judaism to American Culture, 1840-1930* (Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 1994), 52-53, 92-93, 195-197.

[7] David Kaufman, *Shul with a Pool: The "Synagogue-Center" in American Jewish History* (Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 1999), 4.

[8] Barry Chazan, "Education in the Synagogue: The Transformation of the Supplementary School" in *The American Synagogue: A Sanctuary Transformed,* ed. Jack Wertheimer (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 179, 180.

1990s; and Pamela Nadell and Jonathan Sarna edited a volume of articles that include local history, biography, identity and self-definition, politics, religious ritual and tradition, and the American West.[9]

Like all sociologists, those of American Jews gather data, analyze demographic trends, and offer comparative ethnic studies. One of the most prolific contributors to the sociology of the American Jewish community and identity formation, Marshall Sklare, asserts that because "Jewish education...train[s] in the cultural heritage of the Jewish people, it is both an index to the type of Jewish identity practiced and desired, as well as a force contributing to the shaping of identity."[10] Sklare's sociological explorations are buttressed by numerous demographic studies that have been conducted over the last thirty years. The research of Sidney Goldstein, Calvin Goldscheider, Steven Cohen, and others involves in-depth analysis of surveys that probe tangible markers defining Jewish identity, including the activities, beliefs, practices, communal involvement, education, physical growth, and movement of Jewish individuals in communities all over the country. These studies contribute to an effort to determine the extent to which the goals of synagogues and communal organizations – to create Jews with a positive Jewish identification that leads to active Jewish communal involvement – are actually being realized in the face of assimilatory trends.[11]

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[9] Karla Goldman, "Beyond the Gallery: American Jewish Women in the 1890s," in *Beyond the Synagogue Gallery: Finding a Place for Women in American Judaism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 172-199; Faith Rogow, *Gone to Another Meeting: The National Council of Jewish Women, 1893-1993* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1993); Pamela S. Nadell and Jonathan D. Sarna, eds., *Women and American Judaism: Historical Perspectives* (Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 2001).

[10] Marshall Sklare, *America's Jews* (New York: Random House, 1971). See also Marshall Sklare, ed., *The Jewish Community in America* (New York: Berman House, 1974); Marshall Sklare and Joseph Greenblum, *Jewish Identity on the Suburban Frontier: A Study of Group Survival in the Open Society,* 2d ed. (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1979).

[11] Sidney Goldstein and Calvin Goldscheider, *Jewish Americans: Three Generations in a Jewish Community* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968); Sidney Goldstein and Alice Goldstein,

In many ways, a discussion about what defines a Jew is central to the study of Jewish education because the ultimate purpose of any form of education is the successful transmission of ideas so that individual identity is shaped to reflect or embody those ideas. Beyond the examination of inter-group relationships and institutional development, the question at the core of this thesis deals with how individuals and groups grappled with defining an authentic American Judaism. Bearing in mind issues surrounding Jewish identity formation adds necessary color to the history and evolution of Jewish education in Indianapolis. Although it is not the purpose of this thesis to make a final determination about the "most successful" form of Jewish education, it is necessary to observe what the community considered success or failure in varying approaches. The question almost answers itself: Why else has the approach to Jewish education changed over time if not to make it better at solidifying Jewish individual and communal identity in the face of threats to Jewish continuity?

While examinations of smaller communities are making their way into the collective historiography, the majority of these studies are articles, chapters in books, or amateur histories. A number of sources deal explicitly with the Indianapolis Jewish community, although they vary greatly with respect to scope, and both quality and depth of examination. Judith Endelman's thorough treatment of the Indianapolis Jewish community from 1849 to 1984 places the community in a larger context of the overall American Jewish experience, and presents an in-depth examination of the development of

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Jews on the Move: Implications for Jewish Identity (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996); Alice Goldstein and Sylvia B. Fishman, *Teach Your Children When They Are Young: Contemporary Jewish Education in the United States,* Research Report 10 (Waltham, MA: Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University, 1993); Steven M. Cohen, "Jewish Continuity over Judaic Content: The Moderately Affiliated American Jew" in *The Americanization of the Jews*, ed. Robert M. Seltzer and Norman J. Cohen (New York: New York University Press, 1995); Steven M. Cohen, *American Modernity and Jewish Identity* (New York: Tavistock Publications, 1983).

the community itself.[12] Endelman recounts the community's physical growth, traces its geographic movement, describes the evolution and role of its organizations, and examines relationships among groups of Jews and between the Jewish community and the general community. The Indiana Jewish Historical Society (IJHS) has published over thirty-five volumes of *Indiana Jewish History*, to which historians (some amateur) have contributed articles addressing many aspects of the history of the Jewish experience in Indiana. Consulted for this thesis were treatments of the Sephardic community, the National Council of Jewish Women, and the Hebrew Academy.[13] Another gem in the historiography of the Indianapolis community is, *To 120 Years! A Social History of the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation (1856-1976).*[14] Authors Ethel and David Rosenberg organized an impressive amount of material never before compiled into one book. Although there are some inaccuracies in the book and citations are not provided, the Rosenberg's managed to weave oral history, meeting minutes, photographs, private papers, correspondence, newspaper articles, and archival materials together with larger issues confronting American Jewry. And finally, this thesis will constitute the third Indiana University master's thesis dealing with some aspect of the Indianapolis Jewish community. In 1933, Myra Auerbach wrote "A Study of the Jewish Settlement in Indianapolis" to earn a degree in economics and sociology and in 1940, Dorothy Anne

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[12] Judith Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis, 1849 to the Present* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).

[13] Irit Erez Boukai, "The Indianapolis Sephardic Community: An Oral History Account," and Sylvia Nahmias Cohen, "The History of the Etz Chaim Sephardic Congregation and Community of Indianapolis, Indiana," *Indiana Jewish History* 34 (February 2001); Anita Heppner Plotinsky, "The Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis, 1971-1986," *Indiana Jewish History* 21 (August 1986); Mrs. Robert Schwab, "A Record of Service: the History and Achievement of the Indianapolis Section of the National Council of Jewish Women," *Indiana Jewish History* 3 (June 1974).

[14] David and Ethel Rosenberg, *To 120 Years! A Social History of the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation (1856-1976)* (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation, 1979).

Forman wrote "A Study of the Jewish Communal Building of Indianapolis" to earn a degree in social services.[15]

Although Jews in every American community have dealt with the challenge of effective Jewish education to either accommodate to expectations of American citizenship or to preserve Jewish tradition and culture in the face of threatening assimilatory trends, each community deserves full consideration for its own unique development. While the story of Jews in Indianapolis may reflect that of Jews in larger cities, their experience is distinctive because of the relatively small size of both the Jewish community and the overall population; at times the Indianapolis Jewish community was progressive in its approach to Jewish education (communal afternoon school), and at other times the community lagged behind popular national trends (all day school).

Each immigrant group and every individual who arrived and settled in Indianapolis adapted differently to a new life of freedom and religious tolerance by determining the appropriate personal melding of American and Jewish culture. In the process of balancing the identities of "Jewish" and "American," individuals and groups within the Indianapolis Jewish community calibrated factors such as level of Jewish observance, dress, language, location of residence, professional integration into the community-at-large, and particularly, the intensity of Jewish education to be provided for Jewish youth. Meaningful to nearly all Jews was the religious education of their children, even though the intensity and method of education varied significantly. In essence, this thesis explores the story of Indianapolis Jews and the ever-evolving process of defining

[15] Myra Auerbach, "A Study of the Jewish Settlement in Indianapolis" (M.A. thesis, Indiana University, 1933); Dorothy Anne Forman, "A Study of the Jewish Communal Building of Indianapolis" (M.A. thesis, Indiana University, 1940).

"Jewishness" against the backdrop of American Jewish history and through the lens of Jewish education and Jewish schools.

CHAPTER 1

JEWISH SETTLEMENT, PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AND EARLY JEWISH EDUCATION IN INDIANAPOLIS

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF JEWISH IMMIGRATION

In the 1650s, Jews of Spanish and Portuguese descent, known as *Sephardim*, were among the first settlers of colonial North America. In very small numbers, they settled along the Atlantic coast, primarily working as shopkeepers or merchants, and integrated socially and culturally. A century later, Sephardic immigration had completely ceased, replaced by a slow trickle of Jews from Central and Eastern Europe, known as *Ashkenazim*. These early Jewish settlers did not perceive it as a threat to be engulfed by American culture, as they enrolled in private schools, wore common dress, had Christian partners in work and philanthropy, and eased some religious practices. Their most notable accomplishment was that they managed to survive as Jews by successfully adapting to new opportunities while holding on to past traditions like embracing the synagogue to come together to worship, organizing burial and charitable societies, and teaching Hebrew to Jewish youth to ensure the perpetuation of Jewish religious and communal life.[16]

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[16] Spanish Jews forced to convert during the Inquisition fled to the New World and settled throughout Latin America from the latter half of the fifteenth century to the late sixteenth century. When the Portuguese re-conquered Brazil in 1654, Jews fled to Dutch colonies throughout the Caribbean Islands, and also to Dutch New Amsterdam in North America, establishing this continent's first Jewish community. Before the nineteenth century, Jews in North America never constituted more than one-tenth of 1 percent of the population. In 1776, there were five Jewish communities with synagogues: Newport, R.I., New York City, Philadelphia, Charleston, S.C., and Savannah. Jacob Rader Marcus, *United States Jewry 1776-1985*, vol. 1 (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 24-45, 167, 307, 664. For a detailed description of Jewish education during the colonial period, see Seymour Fromer, "In the Colonial Period" in *A History of Jewish Education in America*, ed. Judah Pilch (New York: American Association for Jewish Education, 1969). *Sepharad* is the Hebrew word for Spain.

From 1840 to 1880 the immigration of large numbers of Ashkenazic Jews from German-speaking lands resulted in an increase in total Jewish population in the United States from 4,000 in 1820, to about 50,000 in the 1840s, to some 280,000 by the 1880s. German Jews came to America fleeing anti-Jewish riots, frustrated from failed attempts at political emancipation, and in search of economic and civic opportunities. Coinciding with the period of westward expansion, many of these German Jews made their way into the interior United States, peddling clothing, dry goods, and other wares to farmers on the frontier, and eventually establishing small retail shops. German Jews quickly Americanized themselves and Americanized Judaism.[17]

With their penchant for an organized Jewry, German Jews settling in America established the communal infrastructure for philanthropy (The Jewish Welfare Federation) and religious denominationalism (Reform Judaism) that defines much of how American Jewry operates today.[18] In early nineteenth century Germany, the denomination of Reform Judaism emerged as many Jews were influenced by the ideals of the Enlightenment and attempted to become citizens like all others in dress, language, education, and profession. In addition to outward "secular" changes, Reform Jews initiated drastic steps to acculturate religiously as well, by shortening the length and frequency of worship services, allowing men and women to sit together, using the vernacular language for sermons and some prayers, and incorporating choirs and organs

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[17] Robert M. Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought: The Jewish Experience in History* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1982), 643; Jacob Rader Marcus, *United States Jewry 1776-1985*, vol. 4 (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993), 718; Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, eds., *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*, 2d ed. (Oxford, Eng.: Oxford University Press, 1995), 450.

[18] German Jews in Indianapolis established the Indianapolis Jewish Federation in 1905, largely as a result of the many East European Jewish immigrants that came through New York City's Industrial Removal Office. The Jewish Federation's objectives were (and still are) the consolidation of fundraising, the allocation of those funds to support local and national Jewish organizations, and the provision of relief to Jews in need both at home and abroad, regardless of denominational affiliation.

into the service. Reform Judaism grew its deepest roots and crystallized in the United States, where society was more tolerant and encouraged individualism, patriotism, and religious freedom, compared to Europe, where there existed a long history of both the traditionally observant Jewish community and anti-Semitism.

Between 1880 and the outbreak of World War I in 1914, 2.75 million Jews fled the pogroms and repressive conditions in Russia and Eastern Europe, scattering all over the world, with more than two million coming to the United States.[19] Pouring into New York City, an overwhelming number settled on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Many thousands, however, slowly moved westward, either meeting up with family already settled in interior cities, or being resettled by the Industrial Removal Office (IRO).[20] In some ways, these Eastern European Jewish immigrants were similar to their German coreligionists who had arrived two generations earlier: they came to America fleeing persecution and in search of economic and political opportunities; they spoke Yiddish (a dialect mixing Hebrew and German); many were peddlers or skilled artisans; and although poor, young, and uneducated, they were more literate than other immigrant groups.[21] In contrast, however, most East European immigrants were Orthodox in their level of traditional Jewish observance and very resistant to relinquishing those traditions.

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[19] Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought*, 643; Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz, *The Jew in the Modern World*, 449. "In the twenty years before WWI, or within less than a generation, fully 30 percent of all European Jews changed their residence from one continent to another. Whereas in 1880 only 3.8 percent of world Jewry lived in the U.S., by 1933 America had become the home of about 30 percent of the total [world Jewish population] of 15,500,000." Meir Ben-Horin, "From the Turn of the Century to the Late Thirties" in *A History of Jewish Education in America*, ed. Judah Pilch (New York: American Association for Jewish Education, 1969), 53-54.

[20] Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz, *The Jew in the Modern World*, 449-451; Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought*, 643. The Industrial Removal Office was established in 1901 by the Baron de Hirsch fund to help relieve the dangerously congested New York City by resettling East European Jewish immigrants throughout the country. The Indianapolis Jewish community received hundreds of such resettlement "cases" from the IRO between 1905 and end of World War I. Judith E. Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis, 1849 to the Present* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 95, 105.

[21] Marcus, *United States Jewry 1776-1985*, vol. 4, p. 727.

Because they came in such large numbers and purposely settled so close to one another, American customs – both secular and religious – penetrated less easily. They attempted to live in America as they had in their Russian and Polish villages.

In addition to comparing these two groups as native to newcomer, it is also significant to recognize the differences when comparing both groups as immigrants. When German Jews arrived in the mid-nineteenth century, they were swept up with the westward expansion, peddled wares along the frontier, felt fortunate to settle in a community with other Jews, and generally accepted assimilation as necessary and even ideal. In contrast, when East European Jews arrived at the end of the nineteenth century, the expansion period was nearing its end, drawing them into major cities in large numbers and enabling them to stave off acculturation by transplanting the institutions and social pressure from the old world to their new neighborhoods. Enlightenment ideas in Germany translated into Reform Judaism in America, whereas Enlightenment ideas in Eastern Europe and Russia transformed into radical political thought that either embraced Zionism or Socialism, or conversely, failed completely to penetrate the most traditionally observant and religiously learned *shtetls* (self-contained Jewish villages).[22]

In the midst of the Eastern European immigration, which lasted until 1924 when Congress passed the Immigration Act, a much smaller wave of just over 25,000 Sephardic Jews came to the United States between 1899 and 1925.[23] Unlike their Sephardic ancesters from Spain and Portugal, who came to the New World as merchants in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this group of Sephardim came from Ottoman

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[22] Nathan Glazer, *American Judaism,* 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 62-74.

[23] Jack Glazier, "Stigma, Identity and Sephardic-Ashkenazic Relations in Indianapolis," in *Persistence and Flexibility: Anthropological Perspectives on the American Jewish Experience*, ed. Walter P. Zenner (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), 44; Marc D. Angel, *The Sephardim of the United States: An Exploratory Study* (New York: Union of Sephardic Congregations, 1974), 87, 90.

Empire lands, including Turkey, Greece, and Syria. Like most Jewish immigrants before them, these Jews too were fleeing precarious political and economic situations in search of freedom and opportunity. There were major differences, however, in that they brought customs, food, and music unique to the Middle East. Most notably, they spoke Ladino, a mixture of Hebrew and Spanish, rather than Yiddish.[24]

Each wave of immigrants developed their own institutions and patterns of Jewish life that have become distinctive to American Jewry today. And each group grappled with the extent and pace to which they would surrender "old country" ways in favor of American practices or expectations. Interestingly, each successive wave embraced Americanization with less ease, and each group interfaced with others in telling ways. East European Jews had a difficult time tolerating the accommodations German Jews had made, while they were simultaneously scornful of the foreign practices and language of Sephardic Jews. Sephardim were not only dealing with the challenges that came with acculturating into American society, but also with the fact that their coreligionists openly doubted the authenticity of their Jewishness. After two generations of acculturation that brought German Jews success in business, social, and even political spheres, they worried that the huge influx of poor, foreign Jews threatened their respected status, so they created the infrastructure to help aid and aggressively Americanize the seemingly never-ending stream of immigrants.

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[24] These Sephardic Jews settled primarily in only a few American cities: New York, Seattle, San Francisco, and Atlanta; approximately 50 came to Indianapolis. Turkey had been at war with Russia, Italy, and Balkan States, and had recently enforced military conscription. Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis,* 66-67. The term Sephardic has generally come to refer to almost any Jew who is not Ashkenazic, or who does not have Yiddish-language background. Angel, *The Sephardim of the United States,* 77.

INDIANAPOLIS IN CONTEXT

The history of the Indianapolis Jewish community often resembles the experiences of Jews in more substantial centers of Jewish population, like New York City and Chicago. Similarly, throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, Indianapolis' German Jews acculturated into and contributed to the community at large, while also establishing a framework for American Jewish communal life through synagogues, religious schools, and mutual aid societies. The dynamic between established Jews and new Jewish immigrants in Indianapolis paralleled the relationship between these groups in larger cities. The established community felt that the stubborn foreign ways of the immigrants threatened the respected position in society they had worked so hard to earn. They therefore labored diligently to Americanize recent immigrants through an elaborate communal infrastructure that included a community center, settlement house, benevolent societies, and a comprehensive educational program. And, as in all American Jewish communities, the more recent immigrants' attempts to stave off acculturation ultimately failed, and they too developed acceptable ways to fuse Americanism with Judaism.

While similar in the ways described above, Indianapolis' smaller size and its location in a region where 95 percent of the general population was native-born in 1920 made for less conflict between Jews, faster acculturation, and higher rates of assimilation into the general society.[25] Even with the influx of East European immigrants, the size of the Jewish community in Indianapolis has always remained constant, between 1 and 2 percent of the total population.[26] The same was not true for larger urban centers, where the notably disproportionate number of Jewish immigrants posed a more significant and

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[25] Jack Glazier, "Stigma, Identity and Sephardic-Ashkenazic Relations in Indianapolis," 47; Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 186.

[26] Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 4.

actual threat to the security and respect earned by established German Jews. Certainly Jews in Indiana were not free from anti-Semitism, but in larger cities and locations, like Manhattan's Lower East Side, such attitudes were often exacerbated because of Jews' concentration in areas of "socio-economic stress." It is understandable that Jews living in an overwhelmingly Christian, Anglo-Saxon setting would adapt more quickly.[27]

The increased rate of acculturation is important to bear in mind when exploring the extent to which Jews in Indianapolis expressed their Jewishness to the rest of society, and the extent to which they provided a vehicle of Judaic continuity, i.e., education for the next generation. It was precisely because of Indianapolis' size and location that members of the community were compelled to be proactive and among the first communities in the country to establish a "modern" communal approach to Jewish education. Smaller and more cohesive Jewish communities could more readily adjust educational needs and facilities to local needs.[28] Moreover, because Jews integrated more quickly in Indianapolis than in larger centers of Jewish population, they recognized the need for modern Jewish schools to effectively teach youth how to be Jewish sooner than in other communities.

THE GERMAN JEWISH COMMUNITY IN INDIANAPOLIS

In the early nineteenth century, individual Jews came through the state of Indiana as traders exploring the frontier. By the middle of the century, enough Jews had settled to merit the establishment of burial societies and congregations for worship. In fact, it

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[27] Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz, *The Jew in the Modern World*, 450; Marcus, *United States Jewry 1776-1985*, vol. 4, p. 173.

[28] Lloyd P. Gartner, *Jewish Education in the United States: A Documentary History* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1969), 19.

was often the necessity of making provisions for proper Jewish burial that prompted individual Jews to organize as a community. The first three synagogues in Indiana were established between 1848 and 1853 in Fort Wayne, Lafayette, and Evansville.[29] In 1856, fourteen men approved by-laws and a constitution, and an additional thirty-one men signed their name in approval, to establish the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation (IHC).[30] Within this group, over half the men were involved in the clothing business, either owning retail or wholesale shops, or working as tailors, clerks, or cleaners. There were three physicians, one druggist, one optician, one jeweler, one grocer, and a deputy clerk of Marion County. There were at least six sets of brothers. Some came directly from Europe (Germany, Hungary, and England), while most came from towns in the "Old Northwest" of the United States where they had originally settled, which meant they were already well on the road to acculturation.[31]

Although these founding Indianapolis Jews considered themselves nominally traditional (they observed dietary laws and the Sabbath), the seeds of Reform Judaism grew quickly among IHC congregants. Their choice of an English rather than Hebrew name for their congregation is evidence of the acculturation they experienced and their early leanings toward a liberal interpretation of Jewish law. In 1858, congregants invited Rabbi Isaac M. Wise of Cincinnati, the founder of Reform Judaism in America, to dedicate the congregation's first permanent home, a rented room on East Washington Street opposite the Court House.[32] From 1858 to 1861, IHC struggled financially and

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[29] Carolyn S. Blackwell, "Jews," in *Peopling Indiana: The Ethnic Experience,* ed. Robert M. Taylor and Connie A. McBirney (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1996), 316.

[30] David and Ethel Rosenberg, *To 120 Years! A Social History of the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation (1856-1976)* (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation, 1979), 11-13.

[31] Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 15-16.

[32] Rosenberg, *To 120 Years!,* 19; "The History of the Jews of Indianapolis" in *The Reform Advocate*, ed. Emil G. Hirsch (Chicago: Bloch Newman Publishers, May 1909), 3. *The Reform Advocate* was a

continually lost members; although there were approximately 180 Jews living in Indianapolis in 1860, only thirteen men were dues-paying members of the congregation. After a successful public plea for funds in 1862 that brought in $457 and twelve new members, IHC began to grow and improve its financial stability.[33] The population of Indianapolis grew rapidly during the Civil War, bringing more Jews to the area (400 lived in the city by 1866). Auxiliary groups and social clubs organized successful fundraisers, which enabled them to employ religious functionaries and rabbis to conduct services and ritually slaughter meat. Under the guidance of religiously liberal leaders, the congregation adopted Reform practices, which created a more welcoming and progressive atmosphere for the increasing number of Jews who were more lax in their observance. In 1862, congregational secretary Jacob Mitchel attributed the increase in membership (from thirteen to twenty-five) to their embrace of Reform Judaism:

> Israelites flocked to the House of God...This shows the Result of Reform, for this is an Age of progress and Science and the opponents of Reform might as well endeavor to stop the eternal Stride of Time, as to oppose the slow but sure progress of Religions, political and social Reform.[34]

In his 1863 report as outgoing president, Moses Myer credited the further increase in membership (from twenty-five to thirty-three) to the

> pleasing change[s]...The benches have been set so that the rabbi can address himself to every one present, which was not the Case formerly, also Ladies & Gentlemen are seated together, which is nothing more than civilization demands, and we have a choir accompanied by an organ, which makes the divine Service not only refreshing to the soul but also to the mind.[35]

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newspaper/journal published by the Reform Jewish community in Chicago. The paper frequently provided short histories and descriptions of midwestern Jewish communities. Rabbi Wise would later also dedicate the Market Street Temple in 1868 and the Tenth Street Temple in 1899.

[33] Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 19, 22; Rosenberg, *To 120 Years!*, 27.

[34] Rosenberg, *To 120 Years!*, 26.

[35] *Indianapolis Congregation Minute Book, 1856-75*, 4 October 1863, Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati Campus, Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion, Box 492 (hereafter cited as AJA).

By 1864, Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation boasted sixty-three members; the doubling in size could be a result of parents attracted to the first Jewish school established in Indianapolis in 1863 under the leadership of Rabbi Isidor Kalisch. Historian Alan Silverstein suggests that Jewish leaders recognized the Christians' success in linking religious education (the Sunday School) to church affiliation, and began to see religious and Sabbath school as a "possible solution for their own membership recruitment problems, as well as a way to 'save' the Jewish children from the overtures of Christianity."[36] IHC president Jacob Mitchel referred to the school as "an everlasting monument to this Congregation," and within a year, its apparent popularity merited the appointment of a schoolhouse committee to find a building or lot on which to erect a school.[37]

It is worthwhile to note that in IHC's 1863 rabbinic search (which resulted in the hiring of Rabbi Isidor Kalisch), the job description included the ability to teach "Elementary Branches of the English Language."[38] This is a testament to not only how eagerly German-speaking Jews wanted to acculturate, but also the fact that congregational leaders viewed the synagogue and rabbi as necessary tools of both Jewish and non-Jewish learning.

Before public schools were well established in Indianapolis, IHC's rabbi organized religious *and* secular education all day, five days a week, and taught English, German, and Hebrew. The sentiments expressed in the 1867 contract renewal for Rabbi Judah Wechsler reveal the extent to which congregants appreciated having a Jewish

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[36] Alan Silverstein, *Alternatives to Assimilation: The Response of Reform Judaism to American Culture, 1840-1930* (Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 1994), 31.
[37] Rosenberg, *To 120 Years!*, 28.
[38] Rosenberg, *To 120 Years!*, 27.

setting for school: it acknowledged his superb teaching talents, praised him for conducting IHC's first confirmation ceremony, and hoped to retain his services "in the cause of Education and Judaism."[39] In these early years of "classical" Reform Judaism, the Bar Mitzvah (at which a 13-year-old boy reads from the Torah and assumes personal responsibility for observing the commandments) was replaced with a confirmation ceremony to recognize both boys and girls for completing moral and ethical education.[40] Although Rabbi Wechsler accepted an extension of his contract, he abruptly resigned soon thereafter, leaving the congregation, once again, without religious leadership.[41]

The challenge and expense of finding and securing a rabbi who could effectively teach school all day (German, Hebrew and English), as well as lead services, give sermons, conduct life-cycle ceremonies, and maintain the synagogue on a daily basis proved too much for IHC because they were struggling to fund the completion of new synagogue on East Market Street, the building of which had been initiated two years earlier in 1865. In order to save money, they limited their rabbinic search to those willing to accept a smaller salary to perform only the duties of *chazan* (chant prayers and lead services) and *shochet* (ritual slaughterer). Within a month, the congregation secured Rabbi Mayer Messing for almost half what they paid Rabbi Weschler. Rabbi Messing served as IHC's rabbi for forty years, from 1867 to 1907, and quickly out-performed his narrowly contracted responsibilities, becoming the first Jewish religious leader in Indianapolis to actively participate in civic life, both outside and inside the Jewish

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[39] Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 23, 24; Rosenberg, *To 120 Years!,* 33.

[40] Glazer, *American Judaism*, 28.

[41] This marked the end of Wechsler's second term for IHC. By 1867, IHC had employed four different religious "functionaries": Reverend M. Berman (1857-1859), Reverend Judah Wechsler (1858-1861), Rabbi Max Moses (1862-1863), Rabbi Isidor Kalisch (1863-1864), and Reverend Judah Wechsler (1864-1867). Rosenberg, *To 120 Years!*, 33, 188.

community, serving in leadership positions and on boards for a number of charitable organizations.[42]

While there was a "push" toward public schools because congregational leaders decided to close IHC's all-day Jewish school for financial reasons, there was also apparently a "pull" to the free public schools, evidenced by the fact that some congregants were already sending their children there prior to the closing of IHC's all-day school. In his 1867 yearly report, IHC president Herman Bamberger acknowledged this trend and endorsed sending children to the "excellent free schools of this city." He explained that after the public school day ended, "children would be instructed 3-4 times a week in the Hebrew [at the synagogue], while in the free school they would acquire all necessary education, as the German is even introduced there."[43]

Soon after assuming the pulpit in 1867, Rabbi Messing increased the frequency of afternoon Hebrew classes to five days a week, as well as on Saturday after Sabbath morning services. Throughout his forty-year tenure, Rabbi Messing made IHC's educational programs one of his top priorities, resulting in the consistent growth of the Sabbath school, which primarily focused on teaching Hebrew prayers and Bible stories. While Rabbi Messing's leadership was critical, so was the work of individual congregants who taught the Sabbath school classes. Although the overwhelming majority of teachers were women, one man in particular stood out for his contribution: in

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[42] Forty years constitutes the longest continuous service in one congregation of any Rabbi in the United States. Outside the Jewish community, Rabbi Messing served on the boards of the Fresh Air Mission and the Industrial Home for the Blind, on the executive committee of the Indiana Red Cross, and as the first president of the Indianapolis Humane Society; within the Jewish community, he served as a trustee of the local B'nai Brith branch, as secretary of the Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society for twenty-five years, on the board of the Federation of Jewish Charities, and was active in the Central Conference of American Rabbis. He was also one of very few *mohels* in the region, so he traveled extensively performing ritual circumcisions on newborn baby boys. "The History of the Jews of Indianapolis," 5, 7.

[43] Rosenberg, *To 120 Years!*, 34.

1894, Indianapolis-born and public school-educated Isidore Feibleman returned to Indianapolis after earning an Indiana University law degree. He immediately began teaching in the Sabbath school and served on the Sabbath school board, where his enthusiasm inspired a renewed interest among students, parents, and congregants. Determined to improve the school's conditions and overall environment, Feibleman helped raise funds to replace the black boards and benches, created a Sabbath School Orchestra, and even served as the school's superintendent at one point. During Feibleman's involvement, many students who continued their Jewish education through confirmation graduation at the age of sixteen or seventeen, continued as Sabbath school teachers themselves.[44]

Always looking for ways to encourage membership and increase revenue, IHC's board directed Rabbi Messing to charge a fee to non-members for Hebrew lessons ($12-$24 per year per child) and $10 for services that interfered with school time (such as a wedding or bris).[45] By 1899 there were 150 children enrolled in the congregation's Sabbath school.[46] From the mid-1860s into the 1890s, IHC's Sabbath and afternoon school were the only organized formal Jewish education available to Indianapolis Jewish children; their objective was simple and clear: bring Jewish children together to learn Hebrew and Bible stories in order to strengthen adherence to Judaism.

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[44] "The History of the Jews of Indianapolis," 4, 11.
[45] Rosenberg, *To 120 Years!*, 38, 43.
[46] Myra Auerbach, "A Study of the Jewish Settlement in Indianapolis" (M.A. thesis, Indiana University, 1933), 9.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS

Scholars point to the public schools and their immense popularity among Jews as a turning point not only in the history of Jewish education in America, but also in the overall history of Jews in America.[47] Before the widespread acceptance of the public school, religious communities organized private education that included secular and religious studies. For Jews, an underlying reason why they established these Jewish all-day schools was because of the openly Christian character in city-wide schools, which included New Testament scripture readings, moralizing, and observance of Christian holidays. After the Civil War, however, with patriotic fervor high and the removal of overtly sectarian features, Jews enthusiastically adopted the tax-supported schools as the "favored training ground for American civic pride."[48] In 1880, the president of New York City's Hebrew Free Schools passionately argued against Jewish day schools because Jewish children "must mingle with children of all nationalities, creeds, and social grades, to grow up in mutual respect, thereby helping us and themselves to break down all the barriers of race and creed."[49] Additionally, Jews increasingly felt that to endorse sectarian Jewish education at a time when public schools were on the rise would suggest an undesirable, even dangerous separatism.[50]

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[47] See Lloyd P. Gartner, *Jewish Education in the United States: A Documentary History* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1969); Alan Wieder, *Immigration, the Public School, and the 20th Century American Ethos: The Jewish Immigrant as a Case Study* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1985); Max A. Shapiro, "An Historical Analysis and Evaluation of Jewish Religious Textbooks Published in the United States: 1817-1903" (Ph.D. diss., University of Cincinnati, 1960); Stephan F. Brumberg, *Going to America Going to School: The Jewish Immigrant Public School Encounter in Turn-of-the-Century New York City* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1986).

[48] Silverstein, *Alternatives to Assimilation*, 30, 31.

[49] Brumberg, *Going to America Going to School*, 67.

[50] Hyman B. Grinstein, "In the Course of the Nineteenth Century," in *A History of Jewish Education in America*, ed. Judah Pilch (New York: American Association for Jewish Education, 1969), 30, 34. Grinstein also suggests that Jews observed Protestant hostility towards Catholic schools and that this was an additional deterrent to supporting parochial schools.

According to historian Lloyd Gartner, Jews assumed their social and economic place as Americans through embracing core elements of American Jewish ideology, which emphasized religious liberty, separation of church and state, and public school education.[51] In American Jewish thinking, Reform Judaism and the public school perfectly complemented each other because central to Reform Judaism was its expectation that individual Jews should integrate fully into modern society, and "religiously neutral" schools would be the "indispensable training ground for American citizenship" – the key to social acceptance and economic betterment.[52] *Maskilim* (followers of the nineteenth-century Jewish Enlightenment movement in Eastern Europe and Russia), who promoted the compatibility of secular knowledge with Jewish religious beliefs and who were exposed to the Russian *gymnasia,* eagerly dedicated themselves to public education when they arrived in America. For Eastern European Orthodox immigrants, who for centuries venerated the life dedicated to religious learning, the acceptance of secular education came only when outside forces led them to migrate to America and the realities of civic emancipation brought new possibilities that required new learning. Only then did the immigrants recognize that public schools would be the means for their children to assume newly accessible and coveted adult roles.[53] In 1903, even Indianapolis Mayor Charles Bookwalter, in an article in a local newspaper, recognized the connection between secular education and integration when in he affirmed

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[51] Lloyd P. Gartner, "Assimilation and American Jews," in *Jewish Assimilation in Modern Times*, ed. Bela Vago (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1981), 172, 173. It was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that a complete separation of church and state in American education took place. Shapiro, "An Historical Analysis and Evaluation of Jewish Religious Textbooks Published in the United States: 1817-1903," 231.

[52] Gartner, *Jewish Education in the United States*, 7-9.

[53] Brumberg, *Going to America Going to School,* 42-43. Czar Alexander II opened Russian schools and universities to Jews in the 1850s and 1860s and then restricted their access severely in the 1880s, culminating in the 1893 law that legalized the *heder* and prohibited the teaching of any secular subjects in Jewish schools. Brumberg, *Going to America Going to School,* 25.

"the fact that the children of Polish Jews and Russian Jews...show marked development [toward becoming "first-class citizens"] from the moment they enter the public schools."[54]

In addition to identifying the link between public schools, economic attainment, and social acceptance, the embrace of secular education by Jewish immigrants can also be attributed to the tradition of two millennia of Jewish learning, which assigned social prestige, religious merit, and respect to mastering Jewish sacred texts and cultural heritage.[55] Stephen Brumberg suggests that ensuring group survival, while living as a religious and cultural minority in potentially hostile Diaspora environments, required intellectual rather than military defense, and that at a bare minimum, the transmission of specific learning and the fulfillment of religious obligations required literacy.[56] In America, that passion for learning was directed toward the public school. Marshall Sklare, leading sociologist of American Jews, argues that the shift from traditional to secular learning was "so extreme that values actually became transposed: secular education assumed the place that Jewish education had occupied, while Jewish education was shifted to the position formerly assigned to secular education."[57] Historian Alan Wieder goes so far as to call secular public education a religious experience for the immigrant, asserting "if he was less Jewish, the immigrant replaced religion with being an American."[58] The impact would be fateful, because for the first time in Jewish

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[54] Earlier in this article, the mayor espouses the Jews' willingness to "develop into first-class citizens" and observes that "assimilation is rapidly progressing." *Indianapolis Journal*, 18 May 1903.
[55] Gartner, *Jewish Education in the United States*, 3.
[56] Brumberg, *Going to America Going to School,* 20.
[57] Marshall Sklare, *America's Jews* (New York: Random House, 1971), 156.
[58] Wieder, *Immigration, the Public School, and the 20th Century American Ethos*, 104. Wieder's study raises interesting questions and echoes a theme that resonated among religious leaders and educators: must "Americanness" come at the cost of "Jewishness"? The fear of an ever-weakening sense of Jewish

history, religious learning would be relegated to "extracurricular" status, where it waged a losing battle against more interesting distractions for the attention and time of children. The American Jewish community would be forever challenged to successfully impart knowledge of Jewish texts and heritage in the open and untraditional American society that prized secular learning.

As a result of the popularity of the public school, the Sabbath, Sunday, and afternoon religious schools became the prevailing institutions for transmitting Judaism to Jewish children. In 1838, Rebecca Gratz, one of the earliest and most prominent female Jewish philanthropists in American history, established the first Jewish Sunday school in the country in Philadelphia, the seat of the national Christian Sunday School movement.[59] Historians agree that this school adopted its form from the Protestant Sunday school movement, and even used modified Christian primers, Bibles, and catechisms when they were the only texts available.[60] The Sunday school usually met on Saturday and Sunday mornings under the direction of the rabbi and other congregational volunteer teachers. The curriculum included Bible stories, religion taught catechistically, Hebrew verses used regularly in worship services, and Jewish history from biblical times.[61] The Jewish

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identity directly affected the goals of educational institutions, which worked to instill Jewishness to stave off assimilation.

[59] Karla Goldman, *Beyond the Synagogue Gallery: Finding a Place for Women in American Judaism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 61; Silverstein, *Alternatives to Assimilation,* 31. For a biography of Gratz, see Dianne Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz: Women and Judaism in Antebellum America* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997). Ashton focuses on Gratz's pioneering role in the creation of the first independent (nonsynagogal) Jewish women's organizations in America: the Female Hebrew Benevolent Society (1819), the first Jewish Sunday School (1838), and the first American Jewish foster home (1855). The Sunday school was intended for poor children, particularly those of recent immigrants from central Europe.

[60] Jacob Rader Marcus, *The American Jewish Woman, 1654-1980* (New York: KTAV Publishing, 1981), 52; Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz*, 152-153; Goldman, *Beyond the Synagogue Gallery*, 61. Reverend (yes, Jewish) Isaac Leeser wrote and published prolifically, including textbooks for Jewish schools; he wrote one of the earliest (if not the first) English language Jewish catechism in 1839.

[61] Grinstein, "In the Course of the Nineteenth Century," 28.

Sunday school movement was so successful that in 1883, a national federation called the Hebrew Sabbath School Union was established.

The dual thrust of Jewish education, which included both Americanization and Judaization, can be traced to the earliest educational institutions established in the United States. Jacob Rader Marcus, the preeminent scholar of American Jewish history, asserted that the Sunday school "nurtured [the hope] that the survival of the next generation of Jews would be guaranteed through religious indoctrination," and that it was *also* "America's most important Jewish acculturational agency."[62] A significant portion of this acculturation was transmitted through high expectations for student discipline, attendance, and American civic standards of behavior and citizenship (in contrast to the complete lack of such regard that existed in the old world "*heder*"). Graduates of synagogue Sunday and afternoon schools were primed to excel as Jews *and* Americans.[63]

The role of the public school as the primary socializing and Americanizing instrument became even more significant with the influx of East European and Russian Jewish immigrants, who began flooding American shores in 1880. Arriving at the time when the German Jewish community was socially and linguistically acculturated and financially established, these *ostjuden*, although coreligionists, were regarded as "other." Their dress, language (Yiddish), intense level of religious observance, and poverty made established "native" Jews fear that these newcomers would bring detrimental attention to the Jewish community. In Indianapolis, the established Jewish community was relieved by how enthusiastically the new immigrants embraced the public schools. The same enthusiasm, however, would not hold true for the Jewish institutions already in existence

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[62] Marcus, *The American Jewish Woman*, 52, 53.

[63] Silverstein, *Alternatives to Assimilation,* 33. The *heder*, literally meaning "room," was the primary form of Jewish education in Eastern Europe and will be discussed in detail at the end of this chapter.

(IHC and the Sunday school), or for those established specifically for the newcomers by German Jews. Rather, Jews from Eastern Europe and Russia created their own synagogues, organizations, and Jewish schools.

THE EAST EUROPEAN JEWISH COMMUNITY IN INDIANAPOLIS

Beginning as early as the 1870s, but most significantly in the 1880s, the mass arrival of East European immigrants drastically changed the make-up of the Indianapolis Jewish community. Until then, the community of Jews in Indianapolis numbered just over 500 and could be described generally as of German origin, practicing Reform Judaism, socially and culturally integrated into the surrounding society, economically successful, and living on the near north side (Washington Street on the south, Meridian Street on the west, East Street on the east, and New York Street on the north).[64] By 1900, however, immigrants of East European descent formed an overwhelming majority of the Jewish population of less than 4,000.[65] These immigrants were Yiddish-speakers who held tightly to their Orthodox piety, and though generally poor, they were skilled and fairly literate. Settling into the Jewish neighborhood on Indianapolis' south side, which was bounded by Morris Street on the south, Capitol Avenue on the west, Union Street on the east, and Washington Street on the north, their existence was conspicuous.[66] The immigrants purposely settled close to one another in an attempt to create the old world atmosphere. Their self-imposed *shtetl* was complete with a proliferation of small *shuls*

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[64] Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis,* 30.

[65] Ibid., 60-61. This number is an estimate. Endelman expounds on the difficulties and inconsistencies in gathering accurate population statistics for the Jewish community during the final decades of the nineteenth century. In her master's thesis, Myra Auerbach claimed that by 1892 established German Jews were outnumbered by five times by Russians, Hungarians, Galicians, and Poles. Auerbach, "A Study of the Jewish Settlement in Indianapolis," 39-45.

[66] Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 61, 115.

(synagogues), the settlement house and communal building, and Hebrew-lettered signs adorning the businesses they owned, worked at, or patronized.

In 1904, established Indianapolis Jews opened a branch of the Industrial Removal Office, which was an organization based out of New York City designed to relieve the congestion in Manhattan by resettling immigrants into the interior of the country. The creation of the local Industrial Removal Committee in Indianapolis was a milestone because it was the first cooperative undertaking between the north side and south side Jewish communities; moreover, it would prove to be the impetus for establishing a Jewish Federation for the city in 1905.[67] Between 1904 and 1914, 400 to 500 "cases" consisting of families or individuals came to Indianapolis; while the majority remained in the Hoosier capital, some were placed in Shelbyville, Muncie, or other towns in the region, and others moved themselves to St. Louis, Chicago, or Cincinnati.[68] Critical to the success of resettlement in Indianapolis was cooperation with local business owners, particularly Jewish ones, in providing jobs to the immigrants. Kahn Tailoring, one of the country's largest manufacturers of men's suits, was the single largest employer of Jewish immigrants in Indianapolis. In addition to the garment industry, Jews from Eastern Europe worked in other skilled trades as carpenters, shoemakers, or painters, or owned small shops as grocers, butchers, or bakers.

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[67] Ibid., 95-96.

[68] New York's leading Jews were increasingly concerned about the dangerous overcrowding on the Lower East Side; unemployment and unhealthy living conditions were rampant and relocation would address these issues as well as combat anti-Semitism and anti-immigration restrictionist sentiments among nativists. During its lifetime between 1901 and 1922, the IRO sponsored the distribution of 79,000 Jewish immigrants throughout the United States and Canada. The New York office paid a portion of the local agent's salary, plus $10 for each single man and $25 for each family, while the local community paid the remainder of the agent's salary, administrative overhead, and any additional relief and resettlement costs. Samuel Joseph, *History of the Baron de Hirsch Fund: The Americanization of the Jewish Immigrant* (New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1935), 184-205; Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 94-95, 104-105; Auerbach, "A Study of the Jewish Settlement in Indianapolis," 108.

Religiously, Eastern European immigrants found the Reform worship at Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation offensive; initially, they regarded Reform Jews as scarcely more observant than gentiles. Naturally, they found social solace and comfort praying and gathering with immigrants from their country of origin. In 1880, there were 270 synagogues in the country; by 1916 there were over 1,900, almost all of which were established by Jews from East Europe.[69] Indianapolis proved no exception to the proliferation of synagogues. In 1870, a group of Polish Jews organized Sharah Tefilla, the first of the Orthodox south side *shuls.* For twelve years, they held services in a series of rented rooms in locations throughout the south side Jewish neighborhood, while employing a number of different rabbis as well. In 1882 they purchased a building at 352 South Meridian Street and in 1910 they moved to a new structure at South Meridian and Merrill streets "in the heart of the ghetto."[70] In 1884, a very close-knit group of Hungarian Jews established the Hebrew Ohev Zedek Congregation; they too conducted services in a series of rented halls, but unlike other East European immigrants, most Hungarian Jews chose to live east of Monument Circle, rather than in the south side neighborhood. This made Ohev Zedek's 1899 purchase of IHC's Market Street *shul* at Delaware and Market streets ideal because of its location. In 1889, Russian Jews founded Congregation Knesses Israel, building a synagogue on the corner of Eddy and Merrill streets, and then settling into another new structure at 1023 South Meridian Street in 1923. In 1903, seven successful south side businessmen, frustrated with "old country" divisiveness, and interested in finding a middle ground between Reform and Orthodoxy, created the United Hebrew Congregation of Indianapolis (a name chosen specifically to

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[69] Glazer, *American Judaism,* 62.

[70] Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis,* 61-62; Auerbach, "A Study of the Jewish Settlement in Indianapolis," 10-11.

counter the fragmentation that existed among south side *shuls*). Just as IHC had secured the leader of the Reform movement, Isaac Mayer Wise, to come to Indianapolis to dedicate their first two synagogues, the leader of the liberal wing of modern orthodoxy (eventually to become Conservative Judaism), Solomon Schechter, came to dedicate the newly renovated church at Union Street and Madison Avenue for the United Hebrew Congregation. And in 1910, a group of poor peddlers established Congregation Ezras Achim, the last of the south side *shuls* founded by Jews from Eastern Europe; they met in a barn-like, unpainted building on South Meridian Street.[71]

In addition to the many synagogues, the East European Jewish community created their own charitable societies and social organizations. Each synagogue owned a section of the cemetery on Kelly Street and organized their own burial societies to provide free burial rites. Hungarian Jews organized the Indianapolis Jüdische Bruder Verein, a benevolent society providing sick benefits, medical care, and social activities, and embraced Conservative Judaism, which resulted in the United Hebrew Congregation becoming the south side's largest and most influential synagogue, with active women's, men's, and youth groups.[72] Unlike the German Jewish community, which also established burial and benevolent societies, East European Jews additionally created Zionist and socialist organizations. Because Zionism promoted the building up and return of Jews to *Zion* (Palestine, now Israel), Reform Jews adamantly opposed the movement, believing, rather, that Judaism was a religion, Jews were not a separate

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[71] Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis,* 61-66; Auerbach, "A Study of the Jewish Settlement in Indianapolis," 10-13. Just as Isaac Mayer Wise founded and led the Reform Rabbinical Seminary, Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Solomon Schechter was the chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City. Newly organized soon after the turn of the century, JTS would become the premier institution for training Jewish clergy and teachers looking for ways to adopt aspects of Americanism while still holding to Jewish tradition and laws.

[72] Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis,* 66; Mrs. Nandor [Ruth] Fruchter, *Congregation B'nai Torah: The First 50 Years* (Indianapolis, 1973), 17-19.

nation, and Jews should therefore wholly embrace being citizens of the nation in which they lived. Interestingly, while most East European Jews were religiously orthodox, some from this group had been exposed to radical leftist politics in Russia and found in America an open society where they could explore and embrace these ideas. The Zionist organizations in Indianapolis never reached the popularity of the socialist Workmen's Circle, which operated as a benevolent society providing insurance and death benefits, as well as educational, social, charitable, and cultural activities. For these Jews, who rarely attended or did not affiliate with one of the synagogues, the Workmen's Circle offered members a way to maintain and enhance their Jewish identity.[73]

THE SEPHARDIC JEWISH COMMUNITY IN INDIANAPOLIS

The last of the Jewish immigrant groups to come to Indianapolis before World War II were Sephardim from Ottoman Empire lands. Between 1906 and 1913 approximately fifty Jews from Monastir (then part of Turkey) chose Indianapolis as their new home, and from 1914 to 1919 an additional 150 Jews from Salonika, Greece, Aleppo, Syria, and Canakkale, Turkey, joined them.[74] Employing "chain migration," most men immigrated first, alone; once they secured a job and made sufficient money, they would send for their wives and families. Members of this extremely tight-knit community settled within three blocks of each other in the south side neighborhood on South Capitol, South Illinois, and Church streets.[75] Already-settled Sephardic families supported newcomers by boarding them and helping them find a place to live as well as a

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[73] Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis,* 70-73.
[74] Ibid., 66-68.
[75] Irit Erez Boukai, "The Indianapolis Sephardic Jewish Congregation and Community: An Oral History Account," *Indiana Jewish History* 34 (February 2001): 29, interview with Anne Calderon.

job. An overwhelming majority was at one time or another employed at Kahn Tailoring; some then opened up their own tailoring business. Many of the immigrants from Salonika were drawn to the produce industry, from peddling and fruit stands to selling it wholesale. In 1913, they organized Congregation Sepharad of Monastir and initially held services at the Jewish Federation's Communal Building at 17 West Morris Street. With the arrival of Sephardim from places other than Monastir, they eventually changed the name to Etz Chaim Congregation.[76]

For the Sephardic community, the challenges of adjusting to America and Indianapolis were more acute than for other immigrant communities. In addition to grappling with the paradox of acculturation and advancement versus survival as a religious, ethnic, and cultural group – a challenge all immigrant groups and diasporas confront – Sephardim also faced vocal condescension and denigration from Ashkenazim, who openly questioned the authenticity of Sephardic Judaism because of differing customs, foods, and most significantly, language (Sephardim spoke Ladino rather than Yiddish). It is evident from oral histories that this confrontation "figures prominently in the way the [Indianapolis] Sephardim think about themselves and the particular character of their community."[77] By establishing a synagogue, social clubs, a burial society, and a secret fund to provide monetary assistance on a confidential basis, they worked to maintain their unique community as a minority within a minority. By readily going to the Communal Building for English and citizenship classes that promoted Americanization, they heeded the call from the established Jewish community to adapt and integrate. What

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[76] Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis,* 66-69, 86. Sephardim is plural of Sephardic; Ashkenazim is plural for Ashkenazic.

[77] Glazier, "Stigma, Identity and Sephardic-Ashkenazic Relations in Indianapolis," 44, 51; Boukai, "The Indianapolis Sephardic Jewish Congregation and Community: An Oral History Account," 25-89.

is notable is that they managed to do both of these things in the midst of a community that was not only oriented toward the needs of Ashkenazim, but that also consistently emphasized Sephardic differences.[78]

Sephardim in Indianapolis were proud to have established themselves as a distinct community through their own institutions that provided spiritual, social, and financial support. On many occasions, they rebuffed the provisions of clothing or coal that came through the Jewish Welfare Fund. Yet there were two instances where they could not refuse the outstretched hand of the established German Jewish community. IHC's Rabbi Morris Feuerlicht and other Federation officers helped the Sephardic community purchase a cemetery on Kelly Street in 1916 and then their own synagogue building on the corner of Morris and Church streets in 1919.[79] It was not until the maturation of the second generation that the rift started to close when the first three "intermarriages" between Ashkenazim and Sephardim took place in 1932.[80]

Heder and Afternoon School

Although each of the immigrant groups living in the south side neighborhood differed in marked ways, they all agreed that the Sunday school approach to Jewish education employed by the Reform community was appalling. While traditionally

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[78] Although the designation "Turk" was probably initially applied innocently by the Jewish agencies assisting Sephardic immigrants, the term soon assumed a derogatory connotation: "Turk" juxtaposed to "Jew" or politely, "Sephardi" and "Jew." Glazier, "Stigma, Identity and Sephardic-Ashkenazic Relations in Indianapolis," 51, 56.

[79] Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis,* 68. The building purchased was a former Lutheran church, which they converted into a synagogue. There are a couple instances where Jewish congregations in Indianapolis renovated former churches into synagogues, which would have been unthinkable in Europe. David Kaufman explains that "the immigrant learned that in contrast to the Old County, churches were not really so foreign or forbidding in this land of equality of religion. The move into a church building was a demonstration of that powerful idea: in America, Judaism was as much at home as any Christian denomination." Kaufman, *Shul with a Pool*, 178-180.

[80] Auerbach, "A Study of the Jewish Settlement in Indianapolis," 125; Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 170.

observant immigrants were willing to partake in some of the programs, clubs, and classes offered at the Communal Building by the established community, they refused to waver when it came to imparting Jewish knowledge and tradition to their children. Many immigrants, determined to replicate old world practices, employed *melamdim* (elementary teachers) to teach their children in *hadarim* (rooms; singular: *heder*). These words elicit "old country" images of small dark rooms, overcrowded with boys as young as three years old and an old man, whose knowledge of Talmud is only sufficient enough that he could pass himself off as a tutor, and whose propensity for harsh discipline resulted in regular displays of corporal punishment. Each *melamed* was his own entrepreneur, charging modest fees; and each *heder* was an individual operation, not part of a larger integrated educational system. Students with particular talent would proceed to *yeshivah* for advanced study and potential ordination as a rabbi.[81]

Eastern European Jewish immigrants did their best to transplant the *heder* to American soil: the teaching took place in a less-than-desirable basement or rented room, the teacher's knowledge of Hebrew and Torah was only a bit more than that of the immigrants, and the approach to education involved the repetitive chanting of the Hebrew alphabet, the recital of prayers used in synagogue liturgy, and constant memorization. Although the system and facilities were inadequate, they were familiar to East European immigrants and not only symbolized ethnic continuity, but also reveal their resistance to change by attempting to preserve an aspect of their original identity.[82]

Adjusting the *heder* to the realities of living and learning in America was necessary, which meant that rather than all-day instruction, children would come to class

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[81] Brumberg, *Going to America Going to School*, 27. *Hadarim* is the Hebrew plural for *heder* (also written *cheder*), meaning room(s), and *melamdim* is the Hebrew plural for *melamed*, meaning teacher.
[82] Gartner, *Jewish Education in the United States*, 11.

in the afternoon following a day at the public school. In smaller-sized communities like Indianapolis, it also meant that girls would be educated as well as boys. In addition to four private *hadarim* that existed in Indianapolis, each of the south side synagogues struggled to maintain separate afternoon schools, teaching Hebrew as well as customs and ceremonies unique to their European nationality.[83] In the 1890s, the Hungarian community operated a school on South Meridian Street and then organized the Chevrah Talmud Torah in 1896. In 1904, soon after organizing itself as a congregation, the United Hebrew Congregation established a board of education, and congregant Anna Mantel supervised the operation of an afternoon Hebrew school as well as a Sabbath school, which attracted forty and 100 pupils respectively by 1909. By 1907 Sharah Tefilla's school, under the guidance of Rabbi Isaac E. Neustadt, had an enrollment of sixty students.[84] The inclusion of particular traditions and the emphasis on liturgical readings was also new because what had been common knowledge through daily ritual practice in Eastern Europe, had to be taught to Jewish children in America, where the environment of accommodation and integration were undeniable for children of immigrants. Moreover, the fact that the teaching of customs was particular to the country of origin preserved distinctions between immigrant groups, however small, which resulted in continued strain.

An exhaustive 1909 survey of the entire field of Jewish education programs in New York City confirmed what most already knew about the *heder* and disjointed

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[83] Louis Hurwich, *Zichronot: Memoirs of a Hebrew Educator* (Tel Aviv: Newman Publishing Company, 1960); excerpted translations from volume one of three, as well as translations from national Hebrew publications and newspaper articles compiled in privately printed volume by Ben Z. Neustadt, *A Tree of Life* (Columbus, 1975), 5.

[84] "The History of the Jews of Indianapolis," *The Reform Advocate* (1909), 11-13; Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis,* 80. Anna Mantel began supervising the schools upon the departure of Rabbi Samuel B. Kaufman, who resigned in order to become Superintendent of the new Indianapolis Federation.

afternoon schools: "equipment was lacking, discipline was poor, attendance was irregular, and qualified teaching was rare."[85] The same certainly held true in Indianapolis, where the *heder* became the object of contempt for children longing for social time with friends and unable to see any relevance to an education that would, at best, prepare them to read the necessary Hebrew for their Bar Mitzvah. Moreover, the lack of money and dearth of qualified teachers made it increasingly difficult for each synagogue on Indianapolis' south side to continue operating separate schools.

Although new immigrants continued to arrive and settle well beyond the turn of the twentieth century, some newcomers, having been here for two decades, were well on their way to successful adaptation and integration. The ability of the public schools to Americanize, along with the failure of the *heder* to maintain a satisfactory semblance of Jewish observance among second generation Jews, forced yet another wave of immigrants to confront the paradox of Jewish life in America: how can Jewish tradition be preserved and Jewish identity fostered in an open, hospitable society, which does not require religious affiliation? Of course, there is no simple answer or guaranteed solution; yet Jews in America have consistently shaped and re-shaped their cultural, religious, and educational institutions to address this challenge. For Jewish schools, changes would come with new approaches to both pedagogy and communal oversight.

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[85] Irving Howe, *World of our Fathers* (New York: HBJ Publishers, 1976), 202. This was the first community survey of Jewish education in New York City, conducted by Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan (Professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary) and Dr. Bernard Cronson (a public school principal) under the aegis of the New York Kehillah's Committee on Jewish Education. Ben-Horin, "From the Turn of the Century to the Late Thirties," 67-70.

CHAPTER 2

THE COUNCIL RELIGIOUS SCHOOL AND THE UNITED HEBREW SCHOOLS

During the closing decades of the nineteenth century, two overarching groups existed within the Indianapolis Jewish community. One group consisted of nearly completely assimilated second and third generation Jews with roots in Central Europe. These "native" Jews worked in an uncoordinated way to acculturate and aid the newly arriving Jewish immigrants either through relief work provided by women or financial pledges gathered by men. A second group consisted of traditionally observant newcomers born, or whose parents were born, in Eastern Europe. They not only worked to establish themselves both vocationally and communally, but also struggled to maintain certain institutions and perpetuate practices from the old country while living in the new.

Once the immigrant community addressed its most immediate concerns to secure employment and housing, bring the rest of the family over (many having arrived through chain migration), and establish a *shul* (small synagogue) along with a handful of social and benefit societies (*landshmanshftn*), it became increasingly evident to them how great the challenge would be to limit the penetration of Americanism and control impact on the formation of Jewish identity, particularly for the youth. By the turn of the twentieth century, the size of the immigrant population was notably larger than that of the established Jewish community. Keenly aware of their being in the midst of a drastic demographic shift within the Indianapolis Jewish community, native Jews recognized that successful integration of the immigrants demanded organized service delivery rather than haphazard poor relief. Both these groups – the established community and the

newcomers – recognized the shift in the challenges they faced, and then changed their respective approaches by meeting those challenges through communal collaboration and resource pooling.

In 1905, the established community, comprised of nearly all Reform Jewish members of the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation (IHC), created the Jewish Federation to coordinate fundraising efforts as well as the delivery of social, vocational, recreational, and educational services. Through an efficient system of relief, support, and education, each of which would be infused with a healthy dose of Americanization, the Jewish immigrant would learn how to behave as an American. Organizations under the new Federation umbrella included a communal building and shelter house, as well as the services and programs provided by two women's organizations, the Hebrew Ladies' Benevolent Society and the Indianapolis Section of the National Council of Jewish Women. This chapter will explore how the goal of Americanization defined the Jewish educational programs under the Federation, while focusing on the contributions of women to the integration and education of Jewish immigrants, particularly children.

Of course, to the immigrant Orthodox community, Americanization-infused Jewish education was ludicrous and the exact opposite of what a Jewish school's goals should be, which was to safeguard and perpetuate traditional modes of Orthodox piety within the home and as a tightly knit insular community. However, members of the Orthodox synagogues on Indianapolis' south side recognized that unless they could somehow accommodate to the American way of life, which meant surrendering certain aspects of their old-world Jewish identity, their American-born children might very well abandon Judaism entirely. In 1911, the south side Orthodox community as a whole

attempted to meet this challenge by accepting the call to pool their resources and establish a single communal afternoon Hebrew school. This chapter will also explore the creation and development of this innovative communal approach to traditional Hebrew and Judaic education, and the first fifteen years of the United Hebrew Schools until its assumption by none other than the Jewish Federation of Indianapolis.

The National Council of Jewish Women and The Council Religious School

Whether the Sunday school or the *heder*, the frustration – and even disgust – for the other community's educational options was reciprocal. The established community considered the cramped quarters of the *heder* to be a physically unhealthy environment, the subject matter too narrow (religious texts only), and the approach to be old world and "backward" (rote memorization and repetition). Highly acculturated Jews in Indianapolis (as in all cities) dealt with conflicting feelings regarding the ever-growing mass of immigrant Jews on the city's south side. Arriving at the time when the German Jewish community was socially integrated and financially established, these *ostjuden* (East European Jews) were regarded as "other." Their dress, language (Yiddish), intense level of religious observance, and poverty made established "native" Jews fearful that these newcomers would bring unnecessary and detrimental attention to the Jewish community and jeopardize the respect and acceptance of the gentile community. While such fears motivated the German Jewish community to try to bring about change, they were also committed to pursuing the three pillars of Judaism: philanthropy, study, and prayer. So, even while frustrated with the educational approach and dress of their coreligionists,

native Jews immediately worked to assist them with the aid of shelter, food, clothing, and coal.

In 1859, three years after the founding of IHC, and at the suggestion of Rabbi Judah Wechsler, wives of members created the Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society (HLBS). This society originally existed as a charity organization and women's auxiliary to IHC and its members. In the 1870s and 1880s, however, the HLBS was among the first to recognize and satisfy the most pressing needs of Jewish immigrants settling in or passing through Indianapolis by dispensing "an old-fashioned kind of charity including money, groceries, and coal given personally to each needy family by a weekly visitor who was to acquaint herself with the family's 'moral and physical' [needs which were] necessary for their proper uplifting."[86] The significance of the "ladies' society" as the most important Jewish woman's organization in every city throughout the country "cannot be overstressed," as it functioned as the social-welfare arm providing aid to the local Jewish poor, as the synagogue auxiliary providing funds for its physical maintenance and aesthetic improvement, and as the social club for the town's Jewish women.[87]

The increasing role of Indianapolis Jewish women in philanthropic endeavors mirrors that of middle-class club women in communities all over the country who were part of a larger movement to extend their proper place from the home to the public arena, while working to improve the long-term outcomes of charitable relief work. Throughout

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[86] Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 74, 90; *Die Deborah* 4 (15 April 1859): 278 in Endelman Papers, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis (hereafter cited as IHS). Rabbi Mayer Messing served as the Society's honorary secretary for over twenty years. "The History of the Jews of Indianapolis," *The Reform Advocate* (1909), 7.

[87] Jacob Rader Marcus, *The American Jewish Woman: A Documentary History* (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1981), 204.

the nineteenth century, Jewish women dramatically transformed their roles within the Jewish community, constituting a preponderant majority of those attending religious services, acting as fundraisers and prime supporters of the synagogue, and creating benevolent societies of their own dedicated to philanthropic tasks that assisted the poor, widowed, and orphaned. The mass immigration of Eastern European Jews in the decades surrounding the turn of the twentieth century, and the establishment of the National Council of Jewish Women, opened new venues of religious expression for women, as they expanded their simple benevolent endeavors into a commitment to eradicate social problems by engaging in organized settlement work and assuming greater responsibilities in communal and congregational schools. Service to the Jewish community itself became an expression of Judaism, while defining philanthropic and educational work as religious expression fit nicely into American notions of womanhood.[88]

The efforts of these second generation women reveal their acceptance of an understanding about Jewish life on American soil – that in return for fulfilling the expectations of American civic obligations, thereby actualizing the democratic experience (such as voting, philanthropy, supporting public education, and integrating into society-at-large), Jews would be tolerated as citizens free to practice their religion. For native Jews, Americanizing their coreligionists was not only an ideal way for them to

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[88] Marcus, *The American Jewish Woman, 1654-1980*, 51; Pamela S. Nadell and Jonathan D. Sarna, eds., *Women and American Judaism: Historical Perspectives* (Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 2001), 4; Rogow, *Gone to Another Meeting*, 132; June Sochen, "Some Observations on the Role of American Jewish Women as Communal Volunteers," *American Jewish History* 70 (September 1980): 24. See also: Karla Goldman, "The Public Religious Lives of Cincinnati's Jewish Women," in *Women and American Judaism*, 107-127; Beth S. Wenger, "Jewish Women of the Club: The Changing Public Role of Atlanta's Jewish Women (1870-1930) in *History of Women in the United States: Historical Articles on Women's Lives and Activities*, vol. 16, *Women Together: Organizational Life,* ed. Nancy F. Cott (Munich: K.G.Saur, 1994), 284-306; Charlotte Baum, Paula Hyman, and Sonya Michel, eds., *The Jewish Woman in America* (New York: Dial, 1976), 46-53.

express their own Jewishness, but was also seen as the very hinge to safeguarding Jews' existence in America.

In 1893 the National Council of Jewish Women was born out of a four-day conference where hundreds of Jewish women from all over the country came together at the Chicago World's Fair to discuss their role and responsibility in charitable work, the synagogue, and the workplace. In her address to the First Jewish Women's Congress, delegate Goldie Bamber described the programs offered by Boston's Jewish women, which included an after-school Industrial School for girls to learn cleanliness, manners, sewing, and darning, and a Sabbath School supplemented by evening classes open to boys and adults, as well as girls. Her words convey how women understood their critical role in providing solutions to the problems of the immigrant Jewish poor by remaking them in their image and integrating them into society through education that Americanized their daily tasks, their attitudes, and even their Judaism. Evident is the direct connection between Americanization and Jewish education, and the activist Jewish woman as the necessary link between the two:

> ...If our aim is to effect a change, to redeem the poor and uplift them from their sordid surroundings, we must devote time and thought to the character and need of the individual...In Boston, we have commenced with the children, trusting through them to influence their elders; they are the future citizens, and in them we are not obliged to contend with confirmed habits, old-world prejudice and superstitions...[W]e consider it necessary to supplement [the public schools] by special schools, where more attention may be paid to the assimilation and growth of American ideas...The intimate association with the children revealed the deficiency of their moral and religious training, and a Sabbath School was the outgrowth. The instruction is not dogmatic, and observance of the ceremonies is not strenuously insisted on so much as an intelligent conception of and adherence to the vital principles of Judaism...Good manners are cultivated, and opportunities are given the children at religious festivals to meet and mingle with those more favored children who know the charms of a refined home...All Israel suffers in the

> degradation of its poor; woman is the Messiah come to deliver them from their second bondage of ignorance and misery. She is the educator, the reformer, and the reward of her labor will be the evolution of a nobler race of worthy citizens and respected members of society.[89]

Second and third generation Reform Jewish women in Indianapolis became more organized, more active, and more dedicated to the notion that education, rather than just financial and food relief, was key to successfully Americanizing, integrating, and shaping the proper Jewish identity for immigrants. In 1896, twenty-five women established the Indianapolis Section of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), becoming one of fifty sections across the country. They promptly organized an industrial training school to teach poor girls "darning, patching, and making over clothes"; forty girls attended the first year and they planned to provide the school again the following year.[90] Industrial training schools like this emerged all over the country, and embodied the notion that education in American ways through the medium of progressive religion was itself a form of Americanization.[91]

In 1904 at the suggestion of IHC Rabbi Morris Feuerlicht, who urged the women to give up their "genteel programs" and get more serious about the day-to-day work necessary to help the new arrivals, the members of the Indianapolis Section reorganized in order to emphasize their concern for the social welfare and education of the immigrant poor. They established committees on religion and religious schools, personal service and philanthropy, reciprocity, immigrant aid, education, purity of the press, membership,

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[89] Goldie Bamber, "Women's Place in Charitable Work – What It Is and What It Should Be" in *Papers of the Jewish Women's Congress Held at Chicago September 4, 5, 6, and 7, 1893* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1894), 157-162.

[90] Three other NCJW sections were established in Indiana in 1896, in Marion, Wabash, and Peru, and three additional sections were ready to organize. *National Council of Jewish Women: Proceedings of the First Convention Held at New York* (November 15-19, 1896), 77-78; Mrs. Robert Schwab, "A Record of Service: the History and Achievement of the Indianapolis Section of the National Council of Jewish Women," *Indiana Jewish History* 3 (June 1974): 1.

[91] Kaufman, *Shul with a Pool*, 97.

sociability, program music, Juvenile Court and preventive work, and junior sections.[92] In 1908, the Religious School Committee, whose purpose was to Americanize Jewish children through religious education, founded a "School in Jewish History." Council members taught classes on Judaism and Jewish history, including holiday observances and Bible stories, for two hours on Sunday mornings at the Nathan Morris Settlement House; the Council Religious School attracted an annual enrollment between 150 and 200 children who could attend through confirmation/graduation at the age of sixteen.[93]

Because Council women taught in the Sabbath schools they created, the national organization encouraged them to become more educated themselves by organizing Study Circles that explored the underlying principles of Judaism as well as its history, literature, and customs. A core of women's clubs' activities since 1860, Study Circles were not a Council invention, though NCJW was the first organization to apply the methods to the study of Judaism.[94] An educated Jewish woman would not only be better able to create an exemplary Jewish home, but would also improve her work as an educator in the Jewish community and the Sabbath school.[95] Study Circle topics explored by Indianapolis Council women between 1905 and 1909 included:

> Jews in America, Jews in Music and Literature, Home and the Sabbath School, Women in Israel, Jewish Women in the Home; Jewish Women in Philanthropy, the Prophets of Israel, Jews in Russia, Women of the Bible, Ghettos of Yesterday (Prague, Frankfurt, Rome), Spanish Jewish Poets,

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[92] "The History of the Jews of Indianapolis," *The Reform Advocate* (1909), 9, 19; Mary Fink and Tevie Jacobs, "The Way it Was That Day," *Indiana Jewish History* 30 (August 1994): 11.

[93] Jewish Federation Board of Governors Meeting Minutes, 28 May 1908, 8 September 1908, Minute Book 1905-1908, Box 1A, Folder 1, Jewish Welfare Federation Records (hereafter cited as JWF), IHS; *Indiana Jewish Chronicle*, 13 April 1923; Schwab, "A Record of Service," 1; Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis,* 91; Boukai, "The Indianapolis Sephardic Jewish Congregation and Community: An Oral History Account," 31. Members of the community referred to the School in Jewish History as the Council Religious School.

[94] Rogow, *Gone to Another Meeting*, 60.

[95] Sochen, "Some Observations on the Role of American Jewish Women as Communal Volunteers," 25; Rogow, *Gone to Another Meeting*, 59-67.

> Jewish Ceremonials, What Can the Jewish Woman Do for the Immigrant; Modern Philanthropy and the Relations to the Child, the Jewish Mother – Mission in the Home and the Awakening of Religious Feelings, and the Nathan Morris House and its Possibilities.[96]

The unique nature of the Council Religious School is important to recognize as it filled a number of gaps in the education of immigrants' children. Council women designed these classes for the following reasons: 1) to provide free Jewish education to children whose parents could not afford congregational membership or the *heder*; 2) to provide an alternative to the *heder* for parents who refused to send their children there for ideological or religious reasons, i.e., they wanted to embrace American customs and shed vestiges of their *shtetl*-life existence; 3) to provide an alternative to the *heder* because the NCJW officially found it "un-American, un-progressive, and unethical in its influence;" 4) to ensure the religious education of girls, to whom some *hadarim* refused admittance; 5) to provide an alternative to the Christian missionary effort in Jewish immigrant ghettos; and 6) to reach and influence parents by teaching their children how to live as Jews in America.[97]

In her seminal history of the National Council of Jewish Women, Faith Rogow helps uncover some of the hidden nuances, even seeming contradictions, embedded in the Council's approach to religious education. On the surface, it seems the goal was clear: educate immigrant children so that they fully integrate into American society; this is evident through a menu of classes that ranged from English, naturalization, and

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[96] National Council of Jewish Women Indianapolis Section Program Books 1905-06, 1906-07, 1907-08, 1908-09, Endelman Papers, Box 4, Folder 6, IHS; *Indiana Jewish Chronicle*, 13 April 1923.

[97] "The 1896 report [of the NCJW National Meeting Proceedings] of the religion committee unabashedly states that Council's religious school work should endeavor 'to exterminate the cheder or purely Hebrew school, which is un-American, un-progressive, and unethical in its influence.'" Quoted in Ellen Sue Levi Elwell, "The Founding and Early Programs of the National Council of Jewish Women: Study and Practice as Jewish Women's Religious Expression" (Doctor of Education diss., Indiana University, 1982), 133.

vocational training, to cooking, sewing, and cleaning. But Americanization must not be understood as assimilation, which was profoundly *not* the intention of Council members. Rather, their *method* was Americanization, whereas their *goal* was actually to secure future generations of Jews, particularly girls, capable of maintaining a Jewish home, thereby ensuring the perpetuation of Jewish life in America. Still, while the content of the Council school's curriculum was Judaic, and the women encouraged the children affiliated with all Jewish groups to attend, its underlying purpose was to transmit an *American* Judaism as interpreted primarily by the Reform Jewish community. Yet Rogow insists that Council women "kept from trying to 'convert' immigrants to Reform Judaism, [and rather] fought to preserve Jewish identity without defining what that meant." So the problem was less about unsightly immigrants jeopardizing the accepted place of the native Jew in society, and more about instilling an American Jewish identity impervious to the temptation of complete assimilation.

While Council women worked to divest immigrant children of the traditional European ways they found embarrassing, they were just as concerned about the loss of *all* distinctive culture, which the success of the public school threatened to accomplish. That being said, they vigorously supported immigrant access to quality secular education in the public schools, which included pressing for improvements in teacher training and facilities, and establishing models and operating free kindergartens, playgrounds, and nutrition programs. Still, it was the inculcation of progressive Jewish ideals that would serve to instill an appreciation of moral values, the neglect of which they believed was responsible for the delinquency among the poor and immigrant Jewish youth. Although, as described above, one "gap" the Council School filled was to offer an alternative to the

heder, the bulk of its efforts were not directed toward attracting children away from the Talmud Torah, but rather to provide a Jewish education for those children receiving no religious education at all. Christian missionaries who roamed the south side streets after public school adjourned posed a very real threat to unassuming children who were attracted by the apparent rewards of assimilation, and significantly, who were not off the streets attending an afternoon Hebrew school. Additionally, Rogow explains that immigrant mothers had neither the time, resources, nor understanding of a new generation growing up in America to properly teach daughters the skills to keep a Jewish home. Although it might have seemed revolutionary to insist on educating Jewish girls religiously or vocationally, which was a clear break from traditional practice, it was in fact an extension of their role as mother to teach lessons and practices traditionally learned in the home.[98] Ultimately, the relationship between Jewish education and Americanization was reciprocal. Influenced by notions of progressive religion, which conceived of "religious affiliation as patriotism, [and] since every good American goes to church, the socialization of the Jewish immigrant required the element of religion as a matter of course. Jewish education thereby joined the cause of Americanization."[99]

THE JEWISH FEDERATION OF INDIANAPOLIS AND THE NATHAN MORRIS SETTLEMENT HOUSE

Indianapolis' German Jews established the Jewish Federation in 1905, largely as a result of the immigrants who came through New York City's Industrial Removal Office (IRO). This organization had been established in 1901 to help resettle East European

[98] Rogow, *Gone to Another Meeting*, 70-72, 132, 144-145; Myron Berman, "The Attitude of American Jewry Toward East European Jewish Immigration, 1881-1914" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1963), 513.

[99] Kaufman, *Shul with a Pool,* 97.

immigrants to the country's interior, thereby relieving the dangerous congestion of the city's Lower East Side. By sending "clients" all over the country, and agreeing to pay part of the salary of an agent and some of the costs of relief, the IRO initiated the development of social agencies and "provided a nucleus around which socially minded women and business men could join forces to build a central administrative organization."[100] The Federation's objectives were (and still are) the consolidation of fund raising, the allocation of those funds to support local and national Jewish organizations, and providing relief to Jews in need both at home and abroad, regardless of denominational affiliation. The original basket of local services provided under the Indianapolis Federation umbrella included the resettlement services of the IRO and programs organized by the Hebrew Ladies' Benevolent Society, the National Council of Jewish Women, and the Nathan Morris House. On the national level, the Indianapolis Federation supported the Jewish Orphan Home and the Montefiore Home for the Aged in Cleveland, the National Jewish Hospital in Denver, and the National Farm School near Philadelphia.[101]

Board minutes from the Federation's initial years reveal how involved women were, both in the planning and in the delivery of services. In 1905, Mrs. Emma Eckhouse, NCJW president, was elected by unanimous consent to serve as the Federation's financial secretary, and by 1907, five of the sixteen Federation board

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[100] George Rabinoff, "The Jewish Federation of Indianapolis" (August 1928), 4, Papers of George Rabinoff (Executive Director), Box 270, Folder 7, JWF, IHS. In 1904, Rabbi Morris Feuerlicht had just arrived in Indianapolis, when he immediately recognized the need for "modernized social service." As one of the founders of the Jewish Federation, it was he who insisted that name of the organization *not* include any words like "charity" in order to show its broad scope of including all Jewish organizations in social, educational, and civic outreach. Morris M. Feuerlicht, "A Hoosier Rabbinate," in *Lives and Voices*, ed. Stanley F. Chyet (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1972), 167.

[101] Jewish Federation Board of Governors Meeting Minutes, 14 November 1905, Minute Book 1905-1908, JWF, IHS; Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis,* 95, 105.

members were women. Continuing their decades-long service of relief work, women of the HLBS oversaw the details of doling out support and compiling expenditure reports, which included rent, board, groceries, coal, and financial support given on an individual level. After reviewing the expenses and expected needs, the Federation allocated the HLBS funds, anywhere from $200 to $800 every month.[102]

Having had a near monopoly on the direct delivery of relief and dispensation of charity for decades, the women of the HLBS rightly feared being replaced by the new Federation, which shared the same objective. Trained professionals replaced the volunteer women's "unscientific methods" with a thorough system of case assessment and investigation. In 1908, when the HLBS disbanded, all disbursements for relief came directly from the Federation's office. The minutes from that time period reflect both the disappointment and frustration by the HLBS members:

> Report of the Hebrew Ladies' Benevolent Society was read and ordered filed. Mrs. G. Pink made report that the report read was, as far as she was concerned, the last to be made and that the HLBS would no longer issue any order or disburse funds.[103]

Founded on a progressive social settlement model, the Indianapolis Section of NCJW assumed many of the Hebrew Ladies' Benevolent Society's programs and

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[102] Jewish Federation Board of Governors Meeting Minutes, 14 November 1905, 12 December 1905, 10 April 1906, 12 June 1906, 9 January 1907, 8 October 1907, 23 April 1908, Minute Book 1905-1908, JWF, IHS. The first set of disbursements in the Federation's minutes record the following: Nathan Morris House $200, HLBS $400, Cleveland Orphan Asylum $1,200, Denver Hospital $600, National Farm School $200. Emma Eckhouse was also the founder of the Nathan Morris House and served for many years as the vice president of the Hebrew Ladies' Benevolent Society. "The History of the Jews of Indianapolis," *The Reform Advocate* (1909), 19. Additional women active on the Board in the initial years were Mrs. Henry Rauh (president of the Nathan Morris House), Mrs. Gus Pink (president of the HLBS), Mrs. Louis Wolf, Mrs. Sol. Kiser, Mrs. Harry Kahn, Miss Gertrude Feibleman, and Mrs. M. Schwartz. *Indianapolis Star Magazine*, 5 April 1908.

[103] Jewish Federation Board of Governors Meeting Minutes, 28 May 1908, 9 June 1908, Minute Book 1905-1908, JWF, IHS (emphasis in the original); Feuerlicht, "A Hoosier Rabbinate," 167-168; Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 98.

activities.[104] So widespread did NCJW programming become, that when reviewing all the clubs in Indianapolis, a writer for the *Indianapolis Star* reported "there is no club in the city that accomplishes more earnest philanthropical [sic] work than this council."[105] Within five years of its reorganization, membership jumped from 23 to 139, and by 1923 over 425 women were NCJW members in Indianapolis.[106]

Progressive movement ideas resonated with established American Jews, particularly NCJW members, who embraced the notion that the problems resulting from the mass influx of East European immigrants could be solved through rationally planned social institutions like the settlement house.[107] "Although associated with its nonsectarian neighbor, the Jewish settlement was derived from paradigmatic Jewish values: the duty of philanthropy (*tzedakah*) combined with the duty of universal Jewish education (*Talmud Torah*)."[108] In 1904, Indianapolis Council women founded the Nathan Morris House, a social settlement house on the south side, to consolidate educational, philanthropic, and religious programs and services. Originally located on Russell Avenue, it moved to the Jewish Federation's new building at 821 South Meridian Street in 1905, where its facility and programs became the center for the community's social and educational activities. Named in memory of a well-respected Jewish attorney who died while trying to save his nephew from a burning house, the Nathan Morris House immediately assumed goals beyond providing shelter for transients and relief for newcomers, by instituting a host of Americanization programs through education.

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[104] Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 90.
[105] *Indianapolis Star*, 10 October 1909.
[106] National Council of Jewish Women Indianapolis Section Program Book 1908-09, Endelman Papers, IHS; *Indiana Jewish Chronicle*, 13 April 1923.
[107] Kaufman, *Shul with a Pool,* 91.
[108] Ibid., 93-94.

Although the Nathan Morris House was itself considered a separate constituent agency of the Federation, it was completely run by NCJW members, who maintained a library and taught classes in English and American citizenship, as well as art, music, writing, sewing, embroidery, dressmaking, stenography, typing, cooking, and even dancing. Naturally, the Nathan Morris House also provided rooms for the Council Religious School. In 1906 nearly 600 people regularly attended the aforementioned classes at the Nathan Morris House, including an enrollment of 70 at both the sewing class and the free kindergarten (five mornings a week).[109] The following observation by a *Reform Advocate* journalist is apt:

> They are women of liberality and practical judgment, and...they have made the Nathan Morris House stand for right living and right thinking. That has been their aim and it is in the very atmosphere of the place. The children imbibe it unconsciously from the teacher or from each other.[110]

As with the Council's "School in Jewish History," the settlement's activities served a dual purpose. In addition to helping immigrants adjust to life in America (Americanization), they also served to preserve and harmonize Jewish communal life by bringing Jews together to socialize and learn (Judaization). Because the common denominator was education, the settlement house became primarily an educational institution.[111] In his examination of the "Jewish Center's" emergence and evolution as the unifying institution that merged religious, social, and educational programming, historian David Kaufman asserts that "in an apparent paradox the Jewish settlement

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[109] Report of the Nathan Morris House, December 1906, Minute Book 1905-1908, JWF, IHS. By 1913, the daily attendance at the free kindergarten was 150. "Jews of Indianapolis," *The Reform Advocate* (Chicago, 1913), 9, photocopy in Box 54, Folder 7, Indiana Jewish Historical Society Records (hereafter cited as IJHS), IHS.

[110] "Jews of Indianapolis," *The Reform Advocate* (1913), 9, IJHS, IHS. The Nathan Morris House evolved into the Communal Building, and is today the Jewish Community Center.

[111] Kaufman, *Shul with a Pool*, 93.

would market Judaism – that is, Jewish education and religion – as a form of Americanization."[112]

The Nathan Morris House was among dozens of similar settlements emerging in Jewish communities all over the country that ultimately served as the model and precursor to the Jewish Community Center.[113] In 1912, desperately needing more space, the Federation purchased and renovated a building at 17 West Morris Street. Federation officials renamed it the Communal Building to emphasize their desire "to entice 'every Jewish citizen' to 'become a member of the institution' [which would] 'combine all Jewish activities...so as to build up an institution on democratic principles and to eliminate all charitable phases.'"[114] In other words, the Federation wanted north side Jews to frequent the Communal Building, and know that its purpose would be expanded beyond Americanization and settlement activities to address the needs of strengthening the coherence of the community as a whole. In addition to a library and numerous rooms for classes and club meetings, the new building also included an auditorium/gymnasium and showers so that communal events such as social affairs, lectures, dances, basketball games, entertainment, and club meetings increased in number. The Zionist and Workman's Circle conducted their meetings there, and the Sephardic community used the building for religious services, bar mitzvahs and weddings until they purchased their own

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[112] Ibid., 91.

[113] Each of the following institutions were founded as settlement houses and evolved in Jewish centers: Cleveland Council Educational Alliance (1897); Brooklyn Hebrew Educational Society (1899); Albany Council House (1900); Detroit Hannah Schloss Memorial and Jewish Institute (1900); Boston West End Educational Union (1903); Indianapolis Nathan Morris House (1904); Newark Jewish Day Nursery and Neighborhood House (1904); Columbus B'nai B'rith House (1906); Pittsburgh Columbian School and Settlement (1906); Des Moines Jewish Settlement Association (1907). Kaufman, *Shul with a Pool*, 113-114.

[114] Kaufman, *Shul with a Pool*, 116. Kaufman looked to the Indianapolis example repeatedly. Here Kaufman quotes historian Benjamin Rabinowitz, who wrote a history of the Young Men's Hebrew Associations (YMHA) movement in 1947, and took this language from the Indianapolis Federation's 1911 fundraising campaign material.

building in 1916.[115] The Federation also purchased a small house adjacent to the Communal Building for the kindergarten.[116]

The power of the American social environment and the natural process of acculturation adjusted immigrants more quickly than anticipated. For the native community, it was increasingly evident that the necessity to Americanize recent arrivals was being supplanted by the demand to create a positive Jewish program that would perpetuate Jewish life in America. The need for Judaization began to outweigh the need for Americanization. Notably, while the established community shifted its emphasis to embrace the entire community through Judaic programming and socialization (thus, the Communal Building), the south side Orthodox community was making a similar move in its attempt to bridge the growing divide between foreign-born immigrant parents and first generation Americanized children through a communal approach to Jewish education.

THE "COMMUNAL APPROACH" AND THE INDIANAPOLIS UNITED HEBREW SCHOOLS

To observant immigrant Jews who wanted to safeguard their traditions and intense level of Jewish learning, it was all too obvious that Americanization was a goal of both the Council Religious School and classes at the Nathan Morris House. Yet, as much as they feared the loss of individual and communal Jewish identity, total integration, and the possible demise of Judaism in America, they began to recognize that the *heder* simply could not work on American soil as it had in Eastern Europe. East European immigrants began to acknowledge the criticisms voiced by their German coreligionists, that the

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[115] Sylvia Nahmias Cohen and Anne Calderon, "The History of the Etz Chaim Sephardic Congregation and Community of Indianapolis, Indiana," *Indiana Jewish History* 34 (February 2001): 10-11.

[116] Rabinoff, "The Jewish Federation of Indianapolis," JWF, IHS, 6; Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 93, 103; Dorothy Anne Forman, "A Study of the Jewish Communal Building of Indianapolis" (M.A. thesis, Indiana University, 1940), 17; Feuerlicht, "A Hoosier Rabbinate," 170-173.

heder's unhealthy environment, narrow curriculum, and antiquated method of instruction were not simply wanting, but actually threatened to alienate the next generation of American Jews; products of these *hadarim* "not only emerged with complete ignorance of Torah, but frequently with a negative attitude towards Judaism and Jewish values."[117] The danger of losing their children completely was too great not to begin the process of some accommodation. Prior to the turn of the century, Orthodox immigrants demonstrated their willingness to Americanize as the nationalistic *landslayt shuls,* which were backwards-looking in their insistence on linking members to their formal communal home in Eastern Europe, left their rented quarters for permanent buildings. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, these Eastern European immigrants would face the process of Americanizing their schools as well.[118]

As south side congregations grew in numbers and strength, they managed to assemble children together for organized classes; as a result, parents increasingly opted for the congregational school rather than the *heder,* which subsequently went into decline. Every south side congregation attempted to operate its own afternoon and Sabbath school, and a few had nominal success for short periods of time. Soon after the United Hebrew Congregation was established in 1904, as a middle ground between Reform and Orthodoxy, Rabbi Samuel B. Kaufman instituted both an afternoon weekday Hebrew school and a Sabbath school, which attracted 40 and 100 pupils respectively.[119]

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[117] Leo L. Honor, "The Impact of the American Environment and American Ideas on Jewish Elementary Education in the United States," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 45 (April 1955): 471.

[118] Kaufman, *Shul with a Pool*, 168. See Chapter 1 of this thesis for a description of the many south side synagogues and their transition from rented halls to permanent structures. *Landslayt* is a Yiddish term that describes how Jewish immigrants maintained their identification with the village, town, or city from which they emigrated in Eastern Europe by connecting with immigrants originating from similar regions once in America.

[119] "The History of the Jews of Indianapolis," *The Reform Advocate* (1909), 11-13. Anna Mantel, president of the UHC Ladies' Auxiliary, became the principal of the school upon the departure of Rabbi Samuel

But whether a *heder* or a congregational school, the south side groups consistently lacked the adequate financial means to hire qualified teachers and conduct classes in appropriate spaces.

The relationship among the south side *shuls* was marked by tension and fragmentation, as they dealt with issues of revolving rabbis, competing afternoon schools, disgruntled *melamdim* (teachers in the *hadarim*), disputes over the *kashrut* of meat and sacrificial wine, and of course, the settlement and support for immigrants who continued to arrive in Indianapolis. Amid the tension there was one figure who had earned respect across congregational lines. Rabbi Isaac E. Neustadt, trained at a Lithuanian *yeshivah* (Talmudic college), came to America soon after the turn of the century on a fundraising expedition on behalf of the *yeshivah* he attended as a student. He happened to be in Indianapolis when the Orthodox rabbi died unexpectedly, and was immediately offered and accepted an appointment to become the only Orthodox rabbi in the community.[120] Serving as rabbi for a number of the south side Orthodox congregations, including Knesses Israel (Russian) and Shara Tefilla (Polish), as well as on a periodic basis for Ohev Zedeck (Hungarian), Neustadt was widely respected not only as a devout Jew and Talmudic scholar, but also for his renowned kindness and involvement in Federation activities.[121] It is noteworthy that an Orthodox rabbi served on the Federation's Board of Governors because of the tension, even animosity, that still existed between north side and south side Jews; in fact Neustadt's positive relationship with IHC Rabbi Feuerlicht

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Kaufman, who resigned in order to become the superintendent of the new Federation. UHC was located on Madison Avenue and Union Street.

[120] Hurwich, *Zichronot,* in *A Tree of Life*, 8.

[121] "The History of the Jews of Indianapolis," *The Reform Advocate* (1909), 13.

would prove to be a critical one in his efforts to secure broad communal support and donations from wealthy members of the Reform community.[122]

Recognizing the failure of the *heder* and the limited impact of the congregational schools, Rabbi Neustadt insisted that Jewish education could be successful in America if it was well organized and fully supported by the community. To better utilize funds and hard-to-come-by resources like trained Hebrew teachers, he envisioned a single community-sponsored Hebrew school (traditionally called a *Talmud Torah,* meaning "Torah study") where all Jewish children, regardless of denominational affiliation, would receive a Jewish education. Communal responsibility for Jewish education was a difficult sell, particularly in a community where educational apathy had set in and emotional bias between vying national *shuls* was still strong. It took nearly ten years of persuasion and fundraising before Rabbi Neustadt's dream became a reality.

Ideas of communal organization and sponsorship of Jewish education had been brewing since the turn of the century all over the country; but it was the results of the 1909 Kaplan-Cronson survey of Jewish education in New York City that sparked a serious shift in approach. The authors concluded that the state of Jewish education was deplorable: the demand for Jewish education was lackluster, the means to satisfy the existing need was far too inadequate, and significantly, there was neither an effective system nor consistent content in place. As a result, the organized Jewish community of New York established a Bureau of Jewish Education (BJE) in 1910. They hired Samson Benderly, a Palestinian-born acculturated Zionist devoted to placing Jewish learning at the center of the communal agenda, to take the helm as director. The charge would be to

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[122] Jewish Federation Board of Governors Meeting Minutes, 16 April 1907, Minute Book 1905-1908, JWF, IHS; Hurwich, *Zichronot*, in *A Tree of Life*, 10.

invigorate a "religious awakening" by pulling together all of the disjointed Talmud Torah programs in New York City and enlisting the support of the entire community. The system would include the establishment of institutions to train and certify teachers, as well as the development of a curriculum supported by textbooks published in America (rather than from Europe) and conveyed through an academic approach to pedagogy.[123] Historian Oscar Janowsky contends that the Jewish educational institutions, which emerged so rapidly throughout the 1870s and 1880s as a result of the rise of the public school, were the result of improvisation rather than planning. Therefore, the BJE marks the turning point in Jewish education because of its emphasis on comprehensive planning.[124]

Because the idea of a communal approach did indeed prove to be a watershed in the history of American Jewish education, and was employed by the Indianapolis Jewish community so early on, the theories on which the model was based merit discussion. The communal approach was developed by a cadre of young Jewish educators attending the Jewish Theological Seminary and Columbia University's Teacher's College. Under the personal tutelage of Samson Benderly, Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan (newly appointed dean of the JTS Teacher's Institute), and John Dewey (educational philosopher teaching at Columbia), this hand-picked group of students (known as the "Benderly Boys") engaged

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[123] Ben-Horin, "From the Turn of the Century to the Late Thirties," 67-70; Irving Howe, *World of Our Fathers: The Journey of the East European Jews to America and the Life They Found and Made* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1976), 202-203. The researchers were Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan (professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary) and Dr. Bernard Cronson (a public school principal), and the survey was carried out under the aegis of the New York Kehillah's Committee on Jewish Education. Samson Benderly (1876-1944) has been referred to as the "father of modern Jewish education" for his championing new ideas and the concept of communal responsibility, "communicating a faith in the future of Zion and American Jewry, and cultivating young leadership who would become the pathfinders in Jewish education." Judah Pilch, "Leading Jewish Educators of Blessed Memory," *Jewish Education* 40 (Spring 1971): 9.

[124] Oscar Janowsky, "Jewish Education: Achievements, Problems and Needs," in *The American Jew: A Reappraisal*, ed. Oscar Janowsky (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1972), 127, 130.

in intensive Jewish learning and explored modernist secular worldviews, which they ultimately embraced and applied to shaping the Jewish educational structure in America: cultural Zionism, progressive educational theory, and cultural pluralism.[125]

Historians generally agree that Zionism was the glue that held East European immigrants together, and a generation later – particularly after World War II – would ultimately unite all of American Jewry in one cause. Kaufman asserts that the most effective force in the modernization of the Talmud Torah was cultural Zionism, whose adherents called themselves *Hovevei Zion* (literally, lovers of Zion). Philosopher, essayist, and editor Asher Zvi Ginsberg (who is far better known by his pen name, Ahad Ha'am, which translates into "One of the People") was the foremost spokesperson for this movement, which emphasized the national, rather than religious character of Judaism. He strongly endorsed the establishment of a Jewish center in Palestine, and championed the revival of the Hebrew language and literature. Kaufman describes how Zionist ideas really took hold in America with the immigration of *maskilim* (supporters of the *Haskalah*, the nineteenth-century Jewish Enlightenment movement in Eastern Europe and Russia, which promoted the compatibility of secular knowledge with Jewish religious beliefs), many of whom were also *Hovevei Zion* and subsequently drawn to the teaching profession. Educators translated these ideas into their educational curricula by emphasizing Zionism and Palestine, and by introducing a new pedagogical technique of teaching Hebrew called *ivrit b'ivrit* (literally, Hebrew in Hebrew), where from the first

[125] Kaufman, *Shul with a Pool*, 7, 128-130; Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought*, 748-752. Part of Kaufman's thesis is that this new progressive approach to Jewish education attempted to transform the Talmud Torah into a Jewish center. Mordecai M. Kaplan is recognized as one the premier American rabbis of the twentieth century, whose contributions, theories, and writings ultimately served as the basis for the founding of Reconstructionism, the fourth branch of American Judaism. I draw attention to the "Benderly Boys" because two of them, Emanuel Gamoran and Leo Honor, are cited in this and future chapters, and conducted surveys of Jewish education in Indianapolis that will be explored in Chapter 3.

day of school, instruction of all classes was actually given in Hebrew so that students learned it "as a living language." The widespread application of *ivrit b'ivrit* effectively redefined the Jewish school as a *Hebrew* school, and serves as one of the clearest markers of a community having embraced a "modern" approach to Jewish education (Talmud Torahs established between the 1860s and 1900s used Yiddish or English to teach Hebrew).[126]

The impact of Dewey's progressive educational philosophy was simple: shapers of the new Jewish educational system in America attempted to "reinvent Jewish schooling in the image of the progressive public school," with its emphasis on standards for modern facilities and a healthy school environment, graded classes, varied curriculum and scientific methods of pedagogy, and even the expanded role for the school to become the center of neighborhood social life by including clubs and recreation. Under Dewey, the aim of education was the "progressive identification of the individual's own interest with those of the group; [i.e.,] to socialize the child into the Jewish people."[127] Whereas immigrant Jews embraced the public school as the key to becoming an accepted American, first generation Jews began to fear that Americanization had occurred too rapidly, and sought to preserve the culture so willingly discarded a generation earlier. In this effort, they actually looked to the public school as a model for a new modern Jewish school. If the public school were the gateway to American identity, then the Jewish "public" school could serve as the gateway to preserving Jewish identity.[128] Moreover,

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[126] Kaufman, *Shul with a Pool*, 132, 144; Marcus, *United States Jewry 1776-1985*, vol. 4, p. 389; Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought*, 696-700.

[127] Walter I. Ackerman, "The Americanization of Jewish Education" *Judaism* 24 no. 4 (Fall 1975): 430, quoting Emanuel Gamoran, *Changing Conception in Jewish Education* (New York: MacMillan, 1925), Book II, 37.

[128] Kaufman, *Shul with a Pool*, 130, 138.

an essential aspect of the new ideology of modern Jewish education was that it should be community-centered, not congregationally centered; this directly reflects the prevailing American public school system.[129]

Dewey's philosophy of progressive education dovetailed perfectly with ideas about cultural pluralism, which argued that "the value of American culture was enhanced through the preservation of the ethnic tradition of various subcommunities in America."[130] A guiding principle of progressive Jewish educators was that Jews had the right – actually, the obligation as a member group within a democracy – to perpetuate a distinctive way of life. This notion flew in the face of two generations of nineteenth-century immigrant Jews, whose goal was acculturation just shy of assimilation. In his writings, secular Jewish philosopher Horace Kallen repudiated the notion of the "melting pot" as antithetical to democracy, thereby providing the "essential argument by which American Jews could reasonably declare their position within American society...If they were to remain Jews at all, they really had no other choice."[131] Now progressive Jewish educators understood their role as creating a school system that would mold a Jewish society completely compatible to life in America. Samson Benderly asserted that "what we want in this country is not Jews who can successfully keep up their Jewishness in a few large ghettos, but men and women who have grown up in freedom and can assert themselves as Jews wherever they are."[132]

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[129] Marcus, *United States Jewry 1776-1985*, vol. 4, p.734.

[130] Honor, "The Impact of the American Environment and American Ideas on Jewish Elementary Education in the United States," 481.

[131] Howe, *World of Our Fathers,* 413.

[132] Ackerman, "The Americanization of Jewish Education," 422, 425-426. Ackerman quotes Samson Benderly, "Jewish Education in America," *Jewish Exponent* (17 January 1908) reprinted in *Jewish Education* 20 (Summer 1949): 80-86. Benderly's reference to the ghetto speaks to part of the discussion dealing with parochial all-day Jewish schools; Benderly's Boys and the generation of educators that

In November 1911, after years of fundraising and garnering support, Rabbi Neustadt opened the doors to the Indianapolis United Hebrew Schools, whose board of directors consisted of five to eight representatives from each of the four synagogues that cooperated in establishing the school: Sharah Tefillah, Ohev Zedek, Knesses Israel, and United Hebrew Congregation.[133] Insisting that the school be a model based on the newest methods of instruction and employing the most qualified educators, Rabbi Neustadt refused to hire the elderly, untrained *melamdim* who had taught at the congregational schools and in the *hadarim*.[134] He traveled to New York and interviewed between 150 and 200 candidates to head the new school. He was impressed with Louis Hurwich (1884-1967) because of his commitment to using *ivrit b'ivrit*, his insistence that the school enroll all children, not just the poor, and his concern about the extent of community-wide support (he wanted to make sure there was no hidden factionalism that might jeopardize the school's success). Notably, Hurwich's last question for Neustadt (rather than the first) was regarding salary; he was astonished and impressed to learn that the small Indianapolis community had committed to paying a salary of $1800, which was at least $500 over the average salary of any director in one of New York's largest Talmud Torahs. Hurwich accepted the invitation to come for a personal interview in Indianapolis; and with Neustadt's high recommendation, the board offered him the position of superintendent. Although he sensed that community support was fairly

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followed them, adamantly argued that segregating Jewish children in all day Jewish schools was contrary to the rightful expectations of living in a democracy.

[133] The first officers of the United Hebrew Schools were Solomon Finkelstein (Sharah Tefilla), president; Charles Medias (United Hebrew Congregation), vice president; Moses A Rabinowitz (Knesses Israel), secretary; and Isaac Ciener (Ohev Zedeck), treasurer. *Indianapolis Sunday Star*, 19 December 1910. Henry Bloom was chair of the Education Committee. Charles Medias assumed the presidency after the school's first year, and proved to be the most well-respected and effective force on the board for well over a decade.

[134] Hurwich, *Zichronot*, in *A Tree of Life*, 17; Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 81, 82.

widespread, he had concerns that the vocal protests of the Russian *melamdim,* who resented the fact that their *hadarim* would go out of business with the advent of the new school, might sabotage the effort; so before accepting the position, Hurwich requested that his salary be personally guaranteed by members of the board, a demand unheard of in those times, "but they accepted it willingly."[135]

The first official board meeting of the United Hebrew Schools was a busy one. Principal Hurwich reported that his recent trip to New York resulted in "engaging three competent high classed Hebrew teachers" and that while in New York, he "obtained information from the highest authorities in Hebrew Schools as to the paraphanalia [sic] that are being used in the up to date schools." The board granted his request of $100 to purchase necessary supplies and approved his recommendation for teachers. They also discussed the issue of tuition, deciding that the school would be funded by a monthly tuition of $2 for one child and $1 for each additional child; they only stipulated that collectors use their "discression [sic] in cases where parents are unable to meet the specified rates." Finally, they decided that opening day would be November 12, just two weeks away.[136] Although the notion of tuition may seem obvious, it actually marked a notable break from the traditional Talmud Torah of Eastern Europe and nineteenth-

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[135] Hurwich, *Zichronot*, in *A Tree of Life*, 5-7. Hurwich originally took the job in order to save money to finish a degree in engineering. His five years in Indianapolis marked the beginning of his well-known and well-respected career in Jewish education. He was considered one of the early pioneers in the movement to modernize Jewish education and to foster the concept of communal responsibility. Hurwich founded Boston's Bureau of Jewish Education in 1917, Hebrew College in 1932, as well as Camp Yavneh, the first Hebrew-speaking camp in America. It should also be noted that Rabbi Neustadt's total yearly salary during these early years of the United Hebrew Schools was $300-$500 depending on how much each of the three synagogues contributed; he was supporting a family of ten. Hurwich, *Zichronot*, in *A Tree of Life,* 9, 43.

[136] United Hebrew Schools of Indianapolis, Minute Book 1911-1920, 25 October 1911, IHS. This tuition was actually twice as high as some Talmud Torahs in New York. Hurwich, *Zichronot*, in *A Tree of Life*, 21. Hurwich hired Aaron Markson, Max Gordon, and Pinchas Mazie as teachers. Mazie left after a year, which enabled Hurwich to offer the position to Bernard Isaacs, whom he had originally wanted to hire the year before, but circumstances prevented. By 1919 all three of these teachers had left Indianapolis to work at the Hebrew School in Detroit, where they remained throughout the rest of their careers.

century America, which was specifically intended for orphans or poor children, whose parents could not afford private teachers or the *heder*. The stigma as the "school for the poor" was one of the bigger hurdles for the modern Jewish school – still referred to as a Talmud Torah – to overcome. Proponents of the "modern" Jewish school insisted that if it would truly be a community-supported school, all members of the community must be willing to send their children there. They argued, in fact, that a system which separates children based on ability to pay was "un-American and un-Jewish."[137]

Hurwich immediately established and successfully fulfilled a basic plan for the operation of two branches of the United Hebrew Schools.[138] Sessions would be held Monday through Thursday after public school from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. and on Sunday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. *Ivrit b'ivrit* would be used from the first day of class. In addition to Hebrew, other courses included the Bible, early prophets, Jewish history, customs, and ceremonies; the curriculum called for five years of study. The completion of daily home work assignments was strictly enforced and parents were immediately notified if students failed to comply. Hurwich felt strongly that consistent communication with parents and individual student attention would ensure the schools' success because both student and parent would feel important. This positive student interaction also meant that under no circumstances would corporal punishment be allowed; this policy too maintained the schools' favorable impression in the community. The school year would last eleven months, ensuring both student and teacher one month of vacation during the summer. Teachers were accountable only to the principal, and the

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[137] Leo L. Honor, "Jewish Education in the United States" in *The Jewish People: Past and Present,* vol. 2 (New York: Jewish Encyclopedia Handbooks, Inc, 1948), 158; Honor, "The Impact of the American Environment and American Ideas on Jewish Elementary Education in the United States," 478-479.

[138] Although one institution, the United Hebrew Schools operated two or more branches throughout its history, and was therefore referred to in the plural.

principal was accountable only to the board's School Committee. And finally, teaching must never be interrupted because every minute was precious![139]

Some of these guidelines became standard in modernizing Hebrew Schools around the country, like the hours and days of study, and the curriculum that included the "natural method" of Hebrew instruction. But the smaller size of the Indianapolis community, and the board's unfamiliarity with how politics affected the operation of schools in big cities, set Indianapolis apart. As a result, Hurwich could personally implement rules that would optimize the teaching environment for the instructors, thereby enabling him to entice the best possible teachers available to relocate to Indiana. Because Indianapolis had never had a communal school, it lacked any institutional history, which in larger cities often included board micromanagement and teacher degradation. In Indianapolis, board members were eager to comply with Hurwich's stipulations, including that only he would communicate with the teachers. In turn, each teacher would have the independence to determine what specifically would be taught and how. Compared to the massive schools in the East, where classrooms were packed with fifty children or more, where the *heder* still competed with the afternoon Hebrew school, and where expectations for achievement were low and discipline was awful, the attraction of Indianapolis was evident because the opposite in each of these cases could be promised. The final selling point was the salary. The board authorized Hurwich to offer a guaranteed salary of $75 per month, including a month of paid vacation. This was nearly twice the average monthly pay for a Hebrew teacher in New York; the salary, paid

[139] Hurwich, *Zichronot*, in *A Tree of Life*, 18, 26.

vacation, and positive working environment made the Indianapolis offer something that was "unknown in New York or anywhere else."[140]

The school found immediate success, enrolling an average of 200 boys *and* girls. The south side branch originally met in a rented storage house, but eventually moved to Congregation Sharah Tefilla at South Meridian and Merrill streets; there were 150 students enrolled, divided into class sizes of twenty, along with two teachers and Principal Hurwich. The north side branch conducted classes in Congregation Ohev Zedeck at Market and Delaware streets; there were fifty children enrolled – mostly children of Ohev Zedeck members – divided into class sizes of twelve, with one teacher. Parents were impressed not only with the caliber of teachers, but also with their children's progress. By the winter of the schools' first year (1911), parents packed Sharah Tefilla's sanctuary to hear the children sing Hanukkah songs and recite Hebrew readings. While the children enjoyed learning modern Hebrew words, some parents were frustrated that prayer book learning would only come after vocabulary; to them, Hebrew school had always meant learning to read the *siddur*.[141]

The United Hebrew Schools steadily progressed, with students performing well on regularly administered exams, the board unanimously approving by-laws, and the formation of a Ladies' Auxiliary to plan holiday celebrations for the children and special event fundraisers. At the March 1912 board meeting, Hurwich proudly announced that "after a good many months of hard labor to induce and perfect plans, [he had] succeeded with the aid of Dr. Morris M. Feuerlicht to organize a class at the [Reform] Temple." It

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[140] Hurwich, *Zichronot*, in *A Tree of Life*, 14-15.

[141] Hurwich, *Zichronot*, in *A Tree of Life*, 13, 18-20; Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 82, 84. In March 1915, there were 224 children enrolled and in December 1918, there were 195 children enrolled (160 at the south side branch, 35 at the north side branch). United Hebrew Schools of Indianapolis, Minute Book 1911-1920, 3 March 1915, 9 December 1918, IHS.

seemed Rabbi Neustadt's vision of providing education for all Jews, no matter whether, or even if, they were affiliated with a congregation, would be realized. Yet this relationship was short-lived as board members voiced objections in the very same meeting regarding the fact that IHC pupils were not required to wear head coverings while studying Hebrew. Orthodox Jews consider it alarmingly disrespectful to study and use the language of prayer and of God without covering one's head. The board explained to the IHC branch that "our schools are strictly Orthodox, therefore [we cannot] permit the pupils of any of its branches to sit bareheaded during school hours."[142] This third branch at IHC apparently closed after a few months and the United Hebrew Schools solidified its place as the *Orthodox* school in Indianapolis, and therefore not as inclusive as it originally purported to be. That being said, they did allow boys and girls to study together, something that was unheard of in a traditional Talmud Torah, but was slowly becoming more commonplace in this new era of progressive Jewish education. So while United Hebrew School board members were willing to make some accommodations, they were unwilling to allow their German coreligionists to usurp any decision-making powers or aspects of the program.

In all, the first year of success exceeded everyone's expectations, and Hurwich accepted a three-year contract. Enrollment in the second year required the addition of two more classes. Students once again impressed their parents with holiday performances and even by leading Shabbat services at the synagogues. The Second Annual Purim Ball, organized by the Ladies' Auxiliary, netted over $1,000.[143] The year culminated with a high profile visit from one of Benderly's Boys, Israel Konivitz, who

[142] United Hebrew Schools of Indianapolis, Minute Book 1911-1920, 20 March 1912, IHS.
[143] United Hebrew Schools of Indianapolis, Minute Book 1911-1920, 15 July 1912, 2 December 1912, 5 March 1913, 7 May 1913, IHS; Hurwich, *Zichronot*, in *A Tree of Life*, 21, 24, 26, 28.

was touring the country compiling information about Talmud Torahs. Hurwich described both Konivitz's reaction to and impact on the Indianapolis United Hebrew Schools as overwhelmingly positive:

> He had been in many communities. What he found was invariably most discouraging: Talmud Torahs that were nothing more than Hebrew factories, undisciplined and without plan or program. Suddenly he had found himself in a well-organized institution with graded classes, a comprehensive curriculum, and teachers who were a credit to their profession. The work in the classes showed that there was both interest and progress and that the Talmud Torah was of the caliber that the educators [in New York's BJE] were hoping for.[144]

The sudden death of the United Hebrew Schools' founder, Rabbi Neustadt, in the summer of 1913, conspicuously marked the beginning of a decade of decline for the Talmud Torah, which the board immediately renamed the "Rabbi Neustadt United Hebrew Schools."[145] Almost immediately upon his death, disharmony and concerns about the school's financial solvency and sustainability became replete in the minutes, with regular reports about uncollected subscriptions, the need for additional board members to join and participate on the Finance Committee, and pleas to the community to register more students for school. Financial concerns compounded as the teachers requested a raise, the purchase of necessary supplies were delayed, and the possibility was explored to add a third branch farther north and purchase a building for the south-side branch.[146] While the board consented to the salary increases requested by the three teachers, Hurwich agreed to another three year contract with the same terms at $1800 per year, and

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[144] Rabbi Neustadt died at the age of forty-two. Hurwich, *Zichronot*, in *A Tree of Life,* 28.

[145] United Hebrew Schools of Indianapolis, Minute Book 1911-1920, 30 July 1913, IHS.

[146] United Hebrew Schools of Indianapolis, Minute Book 1911-1920, 10 December 1913, 7 January 1914, 6 May 1914, 10 August 1914, 9 June 1915, IHS. The annual budget for the school started near $5,000 and within a couple years had increased to $6,000. During the school's first two years, the minutes showed a "balance on hand" ranging from $200 to $900; less than a year after Neustadt's death, the school was in $600 debt, which climbed to nearly $3,000 by the summer of 1916. United Hebrew Schools of Indianapolis, Minute Book 1911-1920, 1 April 1914, 12 July 1916, IHS.

then went eight months without pay so that the teachers' payroll could be met. Prior to Neustadt's death, Hurwich never dealt with the school's finances; the founding rabbi had made sure that all of those issues were handled by the board alone so that the staff could concentrate on its priority, educating the students. Now, Hurwich felt – rightly so – that the board looked to him as the primary force keeping the school running.[147] The school managed through the help of a few notable donations from individuals and the unceasing fundraising efforts of the Ladies' Auxiliary, which included an annual Purim Ball held at Tomlinson Hall that quickly became the talk of the town.[148]

Even the foundation of community-wide support shook. During the 1915-1916 school year, the Russian congregation, Knesses Israel, withdrew from the United Hebrew Schools and tried to establish a separate school at the Federation's Communal Building. Although specific reasons for the year-long defection are unclear, it seems they never got over the displacement of the *hadarim* and *melamdim*, and scoffed at the salary paid to Principal Hurwich, whose activities seemed elusive since he did not teach in the classroom. They had repeatedly challenged Rabbi Neustadt's authority with feuds and threats to appoint a rabbi of their own, which would have seriously jeopardized the "united front" that Rabbi Neustadt insisted was so critical. Of the Russian congregation, Hurwich wrote: "Here, Satan had an outpost."[149]

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[147] United Hebrew Schools of Indianapolis, Minute Book 1911-1920, 3 June 1914, 26 July 1915, IHS; Hurwich, *Zichronot*, in *A Tree of Life*, 20, 31, 35.

[148] United Hebrew Schools of Indianapolis, Minute Book 1911-1920, 1 April 1914, 8 July 1914, 10 August 1914, 4 November 1914, 2 December 1914, 6 January 1915, 3 March 1915, IHS. Other fundraisers included selling baseball tickets and conducting raffles, one of which included auctioning off an automobile.

[149] Hurwich, *Zichronot*, in *A Tree of Life*, 11, 39; United Hebrew Schools of Indianapolis, Minute Book 1911-1920, 1 September 1915, 6 October 1915, 3 May 1916, IHS. Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis,* 84. Within two months of Knesses Israel's return to the board, Hurwich resigned.

It was clear that it was not simply Rabbi Neustadt's vision that made the school a reality. Not until his death did the board recognize the importance of his behind-the-scenes involvement, his continuous solicitation of needed dollars, and his powerful presence in maintaining communal harmony and support:

> Rabbi Neustadt held the Indianapolis community by the scruff of the neck, shook it, and hit it with the sledge hammer of logic, persuasion, entreaty, and encouragement until he drove it to realize that Jewish education of the young is their breath of life, that the road of education is hard and costly; that no compromises must be made at the expense of quality, and that all must be of the choicest and the best. He also knew how to convince his congregations that all efforts must first and foremost be invested not in the erection of a big expensive building, which would absorb all the available financial resources, but rather in getting capable educators. "Get the right people first; all else will follow," he said.[150]

Although the financial struggles and community unrest seriously affected morale, the school continued to move forward. In January 1914, the board approached the Indianapolis Public School Corporation about using classrooms in School No. 6 for their south side branch. This was not the beginning of the school's relationship with the public schools; in its first year of operation, the United Hebrew Schools bought from them used blackboards and students' desks. After a few months of discussion, the request was granted to rent two classrooms and one office after regular school hours.[151] There were advantages and disadvantages to this arrangement. The facilities were obviously superior and the students, most of whom attended School No. 6 during the day, gained a certain amount of prestige by remaining in the school after hours. Moreover, the school building provided the opportunity for expansion whenever necessary. Although they conducted

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[150] Hurwich, *Zichronot*, in *A Tree of Life*, 10. Ironically, the 1910 dedication ceremony of a newly constructed synagogue for Sharah Tefilla was described as the "happiest moment of [Rabbi Neustadt's] life" by his son Benjamin Hurwich, *A Tree of Life*, 45.

[151] United Hebrew Schools of Indianapolis, Minute Book 1911-1920, 5 March 1913, 7 January 1914, 1 April 1914, 9 September 1914, IHS; Hurwich, *Zichronot*, in *A Tree of Life*, 13.

classes at the public school for nearly two years, the disadvantage to the teachers not "owning" the space prohibited both their being there before or after hours, as well as decorating their rooms for Jewish holidays. As progressive and exciting as it was to use high quality public school facilities, they ultimately needed their own space to create a Jewish atmosphere.[152] This they secured in November 1915, when they purchased the church on the corner of Union and McCarty streets. The United Hebrew Schools' south side branch remained at that location for the next twenty-five years.[153]

Yet the financial strains would prove to permanently alter the schools' make-up and future direction. In the summer of 1916, while the school celebrated its first graduating class of eighteen students and a new permanent structure to call "home," the deficit neared $3,000. Hurwich's year-end report warned that "expenses must be diminished by reducing staff"; subsequently the board accepted Hurwich's resignation, released one teacher, and kept three teachers on at a reduced salary.[154] Unhappy with their reduced pay and frustrated with board communication, teachers began to resign and replacements hired on a month-to-month basis were less than satisfactory. Additionally,

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[152] Hurwich, *Zichronot*, in *A Tree of Life*, 32. In September 1914, the Board accepted the offer from the Public School Board to place their near north side branch in School No. 1, and by October 1915, they were requesting permission to use School No. 32 at Illinois and 21st streets for a new far north side branch of the school. United Hebrew Schools of Indianapolis, Minute Book 1911-1920, 9 September 1914, 6 October 1915, IHS.

[153] United Hebrew Schools of Indianapolis, Minute Book 1911-1920, 6 January 1915, 25 November 1915, IHS; Hurwich, *Zichronot*, in *A Tree of Life*, 36. The school purchased the building at a cost of $5,555. At Hurwich's urging, a lead gift of $2,000 was donated by Chaim Barrett and the rest of the funds were successfully raised to buy the building outright. This location would be the only branch operating in 1924, when the institution came under the Federation's umbrella. As described above, East European Jews demonstrated their willingness to Americanize by moving communal institutions (synagogues, schools) from rented spaces into permanent buildings, including churches. David Kaufman points out that while the purchase of a church in the old country would likely never have happened, in America, the "land of equality of religion, the immigrant learned that the move into a church building was a demonstration of that powerful idea [that] in America, Judaism was as much at home as any Christian denomination." Kaufman, *Shul with a Pool*, 178.

[154] United Hebrew Schools of Indianapolis, Minute Book 1911-1920, 12 July 1916, 19 July 1916, IHS.

the church-turned-Hebrew school desperately needed remodeling, and enrollment slowly declined as more families migrated to the north side of Indianapolis.[155]

In order to stimulate involvement and increase funds, the school accepted board representation from the Ladies' Auxiliary, Ezras Achim (the peddlers' *shul*), and even the "Turkish" Jews.[156] As addressed in Chapter 1, the relationship between Sephardim and Ashkenazim was tenuous at best, sometimes contentious and sometimes apathetic; but their relationship was forced to play out and move forward through the Jewish education scene. In 1917 members from Congregation Anshe Sfarad Monastir requested a separate class and teacher so that customs unique to the Sephardic tradition could be instilled in their children. The board initially denied the request. Although they eventually capitulated on hiring a Sephardic teacher, they were slow to do so and then consistently reported dissatisfaction with what they considered antiquated methods of instruction. The school needed the funds and twenty-five student boost so badly, however, that in 1920 they finally gave the Sephardic community board representation.[157]

The dilemmas facing the United Hebrew Schools were continuous and the institution was at a crossroad. As early as 1915 board members discussed whether the

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[155] Aaron Markson, who had been promoted to be principal (in addition to teacher) after Hurwhich's departure only months earlier, resigned in October 1916. Max Gordon insisted that he had agreed to reduced pay only because it was supposed to temporary, and ultimately resigned in May 1919 along with Bernard Isaacs, who had been superintendent from the time of Markson's departure; offers made to replace teachers fell through or teachers resigned after only months on the job. Local community members, including one of Rabbi Neustadt's daughters, stepped in to teach classes – and even she was unhappy with her monthly salary. United Hebrew Schools of Indianapolis, Minute Book 1911-1920, 4 October 1916, 14 February 1917, 15 October 1917, 14 April 1918, 13 May 1918, 19 May 1919, 25 June 1919, IHS.

[156] United Hebrew Schools of Indianapolis, Minute Book 1911-1920, 13 June 1917, 10 March 1919, 11 February 1920, IHS. Each of the congregations had seven representatives sitting on the board; the Ladies' Auxiliary was given one seat and the Ezras Achim four.

[157] United Hebrew Schools of Indianapolis, Minute Book 1911-1920, 11 July 1917, 11 February 1920, IHS; Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis,* 84. This agreement was apparently short-lived as records show that the "Sephardic Talmud Torah" met regularly after school in the Communal Building throughout the early 1920s. *Indiana Jewish Chronicle*, 22 February 1924.

Talmud Torah should be placed under the Federation's umbrella; but initial meetings with Federation leaders were apparently unsuccessful.[158] By the early 1920s, the board recognized it had little choice but to officially affiliate with the Federation if it wished to keep its doors open and call itself a "united" community Hebrew school. Although the decade following Rabbi Neustadt's death brought the school its share of challenges and set-backs, Indianapolis could still proudly say that its leaders successfully established one of the earliest progressive community-sponsored Hebrew schools in the country.[159] During his five years as founding principal to the school, Louis Hurwich dedicated every summer to traveling the country to visit other Hebrew Schools; he insisted that even the largest Talmud Torahs in New York could never boast the caliber of graduates that the Indianapolis United Hebrew Schools could: "When I left in 1916 the 200 pupils piled up an achievement record the likes of which I never had in all my subsequent years with any similar school."[160]

Although a progressive "cutting edge" school in the hinterlands of Indiana might seem questionable at first blush, the atmosphere of a smaller community was actually ideal for an experiment in the "community approach." Because Jews integrated more quickly in smaller communities where they were a larger minority, the need for Jewish schools to educate first generation children was needed sooner than in areas with heavy concentrations of Jews. Although the two communities examined in this chapter – Council women and Orthodox leaders – came from opposite ends of the spectrum in their attempt to answer the question of how best to use education to shape Jewish identity, they

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[158] United Hebrew Schools of Indianapolis, Minute Book 1911-1920, 3 March 1915, IHS.

[159] Kaufman, *Shul with a Pool,* 145. Indianapolis followed Boston (1903), Detroit (1906), Chicago (1906), Buffalo (1906), and Cleveland (1907).

[160] Hurwich, *Zichronot*, in *A Tree of Life*, 35, 43. This quote is taken from a letter Hurwich wrote dated 6 May 1962, to the Ladies' Auxiliary in honor of the 51st anniversary of the United Hebrew Schools.

both arrived at the same conclusion: that Jewish education would ensure the continuity of the next generation by teaching the youth how to be *Jewish Americans*, not just Americans and not just Jews. Ultimately, educators from both the north side and south side embraced a systematic and scientific approach, coupled with a pride in maintaining a distinctive culture that would answer the community's fears about the future of Judaism in America. In Chapters 3 and 4 we will continue to see how answering this quest through Jewish education would be met.

CHAPTER 3

THE JEWISH EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION AND CONGREGATIONAL SCHOOLS

Although the United Hebrew Schools was clearly considered "progressive" in 1911, it was far from that ten years later. The Orthodox rabbis who served Indianapolis after Rabbi Neustadt's death apparently lacked the vision to maintain a modern Talmud Torah that served the entire community, and expended little effort in earning respect across denominational lines. Moreover, in those ten years the "denominational lines" had multiplied and shifted considerably. Conservative Judaism became a popular compromise for first generation Jews who had grown up in the Orthodox *shuls* with their parents, but, as acculturated adults, sought more accommodation with American society. So while the controversy ten years prior was the ousting of the Reform school because its students did not wear head coverings, the differences now emerging were not between Orthodox and Reform, but between Orthodox and Conservative.

By the early 1920s, the United Hebrew Schools only operated one branch in the Neustadt Building at Union and McCarty streets on the south side. Enrollment continued to slip as more families migrated north and sent their children to the afternoon schools operated by the newly formed synagogues. The 1920 agreement to give board representation to the Sephardic community was short-lived, because by 1922 the Sephardim were conducting their own afternoon Talmud Torah in the Communal Building.[161] In addition to increasing decentralization, the Neustadt building was also in physical disrepair. And finally, the board of directors was increasingly ineffective, and some members relinquished their board position out of frustration. In his terse

[161] *Indiana Jewish Chronicle*, 22 February 1922; Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis,* 150.

resignation letter to the board, Ohev Zedeck delegate William Shane made clear that his reason for leaving was the unnecessary involvement of rabbis:

> I do hereby tender my resignation as member of Board of Directors. The reason is, as long [as] you have Rabbis attending to the business meetings of the Talmud Torah, I shall not be enclined [sic] to participate at such meeting[s]. The logic of my objection is very clear to every one! Wishing you abondence [sic] of success in your earnest endeavor, Very respectfully yours, Wm. Shane.[162]

Although new to Indianapolis, Daniel Frisch quickly became active in the Indianapolis Jewish community and regularly wrote letters to the editor of the *Indiana Jewish Chronicle.* As an ardent Zionist, he insisted that effective Jewish education was integral to creating a generation of informed and proud Jews, who would be devoted to the building up of Palestine as the Jewish homeland. As an outsider, he drew attention to what he considered gross ineptitudes of the Jewish educational system in Indianapolis:

> ...We cannot expect our children...to attend a school where the sanitary conditions are not at the best, where the methods employed are far from modern, the teachers being incompetent as far as understanding the American children...There seems to be politics going on...The leaders of the Talmud Torah are not chosen by a Talmud Torah membership, but appointed by the different synagogues...By their lack of interest [they] are not always the right ones to control the education of our future generation. There should be established an educational board...elected by the whole Jewish community.[163]

It is likely that Frisch was part of the "faction" that proposed the United Hebrew Schools merge with the Jewish Federation in 1923. Although the Federation was eager to enter the field of Jewish education, it actually had no control over specific allocations

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[162] William Shane to Members of the United Hebrew Schools Board of Directors, 29 September 1922, pasted into the United Hebrew Schools of Indianapolis Minute Book 1911-1920, IHS.

[163] *Indiana Jewish Chronicle*, 2 November 1923. Daniel Frisch (1897-1950) served on the inaugural board of the newly formed Jewish Welfare Fund in 1927. Having arrived soon after the departure of Louis Hurwich (who had established the Zionist Society of Indianapolis), Frisch became the primary organizer of Zionist activities in Indianapolis and eventually became president of the Zionist Organization of America. Hurwich, *Zichronot*, in *A Tree of Life*, 35; Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 139-140.

because in 1918 it surrendered its campaign monopoly in order to affiliate with the Community Fund, which was prohibited from supporting distinctively sectarian activities.[164] The Federation strongly suggested that the school restructure itself with the personal involvement and commitment of certain Federation leaders. These negotiations initially failed, but the reluctance of some to work with the "German" community was eventually outweighed by the necessity for significant reorganization in order to save the school.[165]

In March 1924, in an attempt to regain its status as *the* community's Hebrew school, the United Hebrew Schools' board reorganized the Talmud Torah into the Jewish Educational Association (JEA) "for the purpose of establishing and maintaining a uniform method of Jewish education throughout the City of Indianapolis...maintaining such branches as may be necessary."[166] According to Federation executive director George Rabinoff, it was critical that community-wide support and responsibility be translated into a representative board of men and women, "taking it definitely away from

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[164] "Overwhelmed by the spirit of civic unity that followed America's entry into the war, the Jewish Federation enthusiastically entered into a relationship with the War Chest in 1918, [whose charge was to consolidate] the collection and administration of the various war funds and charities in the city...Charles B. Sommers, a wealthy Jewish businessman, was chairman of the first War Chest campaign in Indianapolis...Money which had previously been given to the Federation would now be donated to the Community Chest, [which would then disburse monthly allocations to Federation agencies]...The War Chest became the Community Chest in 1920 and then the Community Fund in 1923; today it is known as the United Way." Although the Federation abandoned separate fundraising campaigns for local social service organizations, it raised money through the American Jewish Relief Committee for Jewish war sufferers and devastated Jewish communities in Europe. Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis,* 135-137; George Rabinoff, "The Jewish Federation of Indianapolis" (August 1928), 7-8, JWF, IHS.

[165] George Rabinoff, "The Jewish Federation of Indianapolis," 53.

[166] "Articles of Incorporation of the Jewish Educational Association of Indianapolis," filed 19 March 1924, JWF, IHS; Leo L. Honor, "The Jewish Educational Association of Indianapolis, A Survey" (typescript, Spring 1944), Folder 10, Box 10, JWF, IHS; "History of the JEA of Indianapolis, Indiana," Fort Wayne Public Library, 1973, IJHS, IHS. (This article appears to be a publication, as the information above appears on the cover page, but the body of the text reveals that it was written by a member of Congregation Beth-El Zedeck in 1944.)

congregational affiliation and direction."[167] The new board immediately established working committees that addressed staffing, curriculum, finances, and negotiations with the various schools that had emerged in recent years to bring them under the new JEA umbrella. Only two weeks after reorganizing, the JEA went ahead with its Thirteenth Annual Purim Ball, which attracted 1,500 people, considered the "largest gathering of Jewish persons ever assembled in Indianapolis." The finance committee set a campaign goal of $15,000 and proudly announced at the Purim Ball that one-tenth of that goal was already pledged by the members of the new board.[168]

In order to open additional branches, "obtain the best educational leadership," and build an institution along the most "modern" and "progressive" lines, annual fundraisers would be a must, particularly since the Federation was unable to finance them due to its relationship with the Community Fund.[169] In the weeks before the campaigns, lengthy newspaper articles described the JEA's mission and needs and called on Indianapolis Jews to do their part:

> Do you realize that only one out of ten Jewish children in Indianapolis is acquainted with the facts of Jewish religion? Does this mean anything to you? Is your Jewish soul so dead that you will pass this statement by with a shrug of the shoulders? ...We call upon you as a Jew and as a citizen [to] give – and give generously. Remember, for the sake of your own children, that the fate of Judaism is at stake. We are counting on your help. [The] [m]ost important task...is that of educat[ing] the generation which is to follow.[170]

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[167] George Rabinoff, "The Jewish Federation of Indianapolis," 53. Rabinoff was the Federation's executive director from 1921 to 1928. Thirty-three people served on the JEA's board, including Louis Sakowitz (president), Charles Medias (treasurer), Samuel Frommer (educational committee chair), Isaac Marks (finance committee chair), G.A. Efroymson, Louis Borinstein, David Shane, Moses Rabb, Rabbi Morris Feuerlicht, David Hollander, David Calderon, Mrs. S. Dorfman, Mrs. R. Domont, et al. *Indianapolis Star,* 20 March 1924; *Indiana Jewish Chronicle*, 21 March 1924, 11 April 1924.

[168] *Indiana Jewish Chronicle*, 28 March, 11 April 1924.

[169] Ibid., 14 March 1924. In 1924 the school's budget called for $15,000. *Indiana Jewish Chronicle*, 11 April 1924.

[170] Ibid., 11 April 1924.

> It is not only our duty to give financial support, but just as important to send our children to the Hebrew School. Why should not our parents take as much pride and pain in having their children taught Judaism as some of them do in toe dancing or in providing for a musical education?[171]

Although shaming people into making financial pledges ultimately failed, and the fundraising results consistently fell short, the community's enthusiasm persisted and the JEA managed to forge ahead. After five years directing a Baltimore Hebrew school, Palestinian-born Hayim Peretz was secured as the superintendent along with several new teachers. A north side branch called the Ezra School was opened in the basement of the newly formed Central Hebrew Congregation at 21st Street and Central Avenue, and a Jewish Institute was established to train teachers. A welcomed visit from the chief rabbi of Monastir Serbia promoted the critical nature of Hebrew schools, and encouraged the Sephardic community to merge into the JEA.[172] Even Daniel Frisch had positive things to say:

> We [are] convinced that a new era in Jewish education in Indianapolis ha[s] dawned at last. The leaders of our Orthodox Jewish community are beginning to understand that the old fashioned Talmud Torah is passé...the former unsanitary conditions and old time methods...did not inculcate a true appreciation and love for Judaism as do modern methods and inviting atmosphere. The real problem of modern Jewish education is to create a link between the resultless Sunday School and the old fashioned Talmud Torah. The solution lies in a modern Hebrew School with sanitary conditions where the teachers are progressive and competent.[173]

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[171] Ibid., 2 October 1925.

[172] Ibid., 6 June, 31 October, 28 November 1924, 3 April 1925. Established in March 1923, the Central Hebrew Congregation took pride in being the only strictly Orthodox congregation on the north side. (In the late 1920s, Beth-El Zedeck quickly adopted Conservative Judaism.) Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 147. Intended for all teachers and leaders in local Jewish schools and institutions, the curriculum of the Jewish Institute included elementary and advanced Hebrew, Bible, Biblical and post-Biblical history, aims of Jewish education, methods of teaching Jewish history, Jewish ceremonial institutions, classroom management, the adolescent, and the teaching of Jewish current events. Instructors included Rabbi Feuerlicht, Professors William Book and Robert Cavanaugh from Indiana University, Alexander Dushkin (executive director of Jewish Education Association in Chicago, and one of "Benderley's Boys"), faculty from the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, and Hayim Peretz, JEA superintendent. The Institute planned to meet weekly at the Neustadt Building.

[173] *Indiana Jewish Chronicle,* 19 September 1924.

The JEA curriculum included Hebrew, Bible, Jewish history, ethics, and practices of "traditional" Judaism.[174] Once again, the optimism did not last. "Old guard" Talmud Torah supporters who were opposed to the creation of the JEA in the first place were suspicious of increasing Federation involvement. Although there was no "official" relationship between the two organizations, Rabinoff's Federation Annual Reports (1924-1927) acknowledged the necessity of community responsibility for Jewish education. He expressed the hope that the JEA's fundraisers would be successful, while commending the progress made by "those not interested in the past" against "disharmonizing forces." Such "forces" felt threatened by the progressive rhetoric that sounded a lot like cultural pluralism in action:

> We come from different sections of the world, with different backgrounds, habits, viewpoints, culture, and language... [yet] we have a common heritage and a common tradition... Though civilization is becoming increasingly complex, we must hold together. We must maintain our culture and demonstrate our own best values for their incorporation in American life... This is why we have stepped aggressively, though unofficially, into the field of Jewish Education. Thru [sic] this revitalized force, our children secure a knowledge of our history, and have the opportunity of relating Jewish life to American conditions.[175]

The 1926 move of the north side branch from the Orthodox synagogue to the newly purchased and heavily remodeled Kirshbaum Community Center at 23rd and Meridian streets was another sign of impending Federation control.[176] Suspicions were soon confirmed when the Federation created the Jewish Welfare Fund in 1927 to raise funds for Jewish causes throughout the country and abroad; the only local organization to

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[174] Ibid., 21 March 1924.

[175] Annual Report of the Jewish Federation of Indianapolis 1924-1925, pp.6-7, Rabinoff Papers, JWF, IHS.

[176] The Kirshbaum Community Center housed social, philanthropic, and educational activities, as well as a library, gym, and swimming pool for the north side Jewish community. The Communal Building on the south side continued its operations, which still included services for Jews in need, as well as English and naturalization classes, and the NCJW's Religious School. The JEA's north side branch was in the Kirshbaum Center until 1942.

receive an allocation from this Fund would be the JEA, whose entire budget of $15,369 was absorbed in 1928.[177] Fearful that the Reform-dominated Federation would undermine the emphasis on traditional Judaism, and angry that the Federation-influenced JEA board insisted on firing a particular teacher for "incompetence," a group seceded from the JEA and established a rival school called the Indianapolis Talmud Torah, housed at 923 South Illinois Street. Although the competing school operated for nearly two years, enrolling 70 to 75 students, it should be no surprise to learn that it struggled financially. With much prodding and pressure, and after a personal meeting with the new JEA superintendent Meyer Gallin and other communal leaders, the Indianapolis Talmud Torah agreed to merge back into the JEA in 1929. Enrollment of the unified JEA surged to 337 in 1930 as a result of Gallin's leadership and restructuring efforts, along with the Federation's allocation, which allowed for free tuition for all students.[178]

By the mid-to-late-1920s, those suspicious of Federation control were now in the minority. Many upwardly mobile immigrants or American-born first generation Jews embraced opportunities to strengthen their voice and increase their involvement in communal affairs by serving on boards of organizations and agencies. The Jewish Welfare Fund was actually designed to be much more representative than the German-controlled Federation board. Its first board included Jacob Goodman as chair, Daniel

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[177] Rabinoff, "The Jewish Federation of Indianapolis," 55; 1928 Jewish Welfare Fund Campaign Budget, Rabinoff Papers, JWF, IHS.

[178] In 1928, the enrollment had dropped to 154 students. Meyer Gallin, "Jewish Education in Indianapolis" (typescript, no date), 2-3, 12, Files of the Indianapolis Bureau of Jewish Education, Indianapolis (hereafter cited as BJE). Gallin served as the JEA's executive director from 1928 to 1947; he submitted this report to Leo Honor as part of the evaluation of Jewish education in Indianapolis in the fall of 1943. Honor, "The Jewish Educational Association of Indianapolis," 2-4; Rabinoff, "The Jewish Federation of Indianapolis," 55; *Indiana Jewish Chronicle*, 26 July 1929; Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis,* 150-152.

Frisch, David Calderon (a leader in the Sephardic community), and two of the JEA's strongest supporters, Rachel Domont and Charles Medias.[179]

The harsh impact of the Great Depression was evident on the Jewish Welfare Fund's campaign drive, which failed to meet its goal. In 1931, the JEA was forced to reinstitute tuition fees, and enrollment steadily dropped throughout the remainder of the decade.[180] A program of comprehensive Jewish education for the Indianapolis community continued to move forward, however. Gallin restructured the six-year curriculum, modeling it after schools in Boston, Baltimore, Cleveland, and St. Louis. The new standards required a strictly enforced *ivrit b'ivrit* system and increased the number of weekly class hours every two years of school. The JEA also bought a bus to transport the students and altered the schedule so that students attended Hebrew school on fewer days each week, but for longer hours; this approach accounted for a small bump in enrollment in 1934. The JEA kindergarten, which had been established in 1928, continued to attract a handful of children. At the request of NCJW members, the JEA designed and taught a series of adult education classes, which became very popular by bringing in speakers to address Jewish history and ideals. JEA instructors went outside the branch schools to teach special classes: a confirmation class at Congregation Beth-El Zedeck (BEZ) for those students who had received no prior Hebrew education, and a Hebrew class during IHC's Sunday school. The JEA Auxiliary swelled to 500 women arranging holiday celebrations and fundraisers. And the relationship with the Indianapolis Public Schools strengthened as JEA staff worked with schools' drama

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[179] Jacob Goodman was cofounder of Real Silk Hosiery Mills, a Zionist, president of Beth-El Zedeck (1925-1935), and future first non-German Jewish president of the Federation (1946-1949). Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 139-140, 255-256.

[180] Many students also started working during the Depression (selling papers, etc.) in an attempt to help families make ends meet. Gallin, "Jewish Education in Indianapolis," 2-3.

teachers to incorporate Jewish holidays into school festivals or plays; even more significantly, the public high schools officially recognized Hebrew as a credit-worthy language.[181]

The steady migration northward beginning in the 1920s and continuing through the 1960s, would prove to have the most far-reaching impact on the shape of Jewish education in Indianapolis. In the span of three years (1933-1936), enrollment at the Neustadt branch on the south side dropped by nearly 100 students, while enrollment at the north side school in the Kirshbaum Center, renamed the Isaac Marks Branch in memory of the past president and unyielding advocate, increased by over fifty students.[182] It is likely that the other fifty students enrolled at a congregational school. But in order to appreciate the rise and popularity of schools operated by synagogues, we should examine the effect of happenings on the world scene, including the Great Depression, World War II, and the Holocaust, and the founding and struggles of the State of Israel. The impact of these multiple events would forever change the shape of Jewish education in America. Northward migration and suburbanization, however, is the backdrop against which all of these events must be viewed, and the emergence of Conservative Judaism in Indianapolis is where attention must be directed first.

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[181] Additionally, the JEA Auxiliary organized celebrations in honor of the 25th anniversary of communal Jewish education in 1936, and in honor of Gallin's 10th anniversary as JEA director in 1938. Gallin, "Jewish Education in Indianapolis," 2-6, 10-11; *The Jewish Post*, 2 March, 16 March, 5 October 1934, 17 April 1936, 22 May 1938.

[182] Gallin, "Jewish Education in Indianapolis," 2.

CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM EMERGES IN INDIANAPOLIS AND A NEW SENSE OF COMMUNITY

As Jews of East European descent prospered economically, they left the immigrant neighborhoods of the south side and moved northward. In relocating, families distanced themselves, both literally and symbolically, from their immigrant beginnings.[183] Neither the Reform nor the Orthodox congregations satisfied the religious and educational desires of this upwardly mobile group. They found the Reform service at IHC too stripped of familiar traditions, and their school, which only met on Sundays, also lacking. They felt the Orthodox *shuls* on the south side were too attached to East European habits of dress, personal manner, and religious practice, and now were too far away as well. These traditional Jews found a middle ground and synthesis between old and new in Conservative Judaism, which affirmed the need for adjustment to modern realities without breaking the continuity of Jewish law and tradition.[184]

Former leaders of Sharah Tefilla, having moved to the north side (in the area of 16th and Illinois streets), formed Congregation Beth-El in 1915. For ten years this growing group convened in rented meeting halls at 21st and Talbot streets and 30th and Illinois streets. In 1925 they built a new synagogue at 34th and Ruckle streets. Although they were considered the largest Orthodox congregation on the north side, their members were already liberalizing traditional practices, including building a sanctuary that allowed men and women to sit together.[185] In 1927, confirming their willingness to welcome

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[183] Glazier, "Stigma, Identity and Sephardic-Ashkenazic Relations in Indianapolis," 57.

[184] Under the leadership of eminent scholar Solomon Schechter (1847-1915), who was invited to head the Jewish Theological Seminary 1901 (after two decades as Professor of Judaica at Oxford), the institution became the center of Conservative Judaism. Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought,* 645.

[185] "Our History" in *Dedication of the Temple of Congregation Beth-El Zedeck* (Indianapolis, 1958), 25; *Indiana Jewish Chronicle*, 4 December 1925. The dedication ceremony included all of the city's rabbis, the president of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations from New York City, and Indiana Governor Ed Jackson, who, ironically, spoke about freedom and tolerance, although it was known that he

even more change, Beth-El congregants hired a very recent graduate from the Jewish Theological Seminary to be their rabbi, Milton Steinberg.[186] He arrived in Indianapolis with Cantor Myro Glass, who served the congregation for twenty-eight years.

Also in 1927, two north side Orthodox congregations, Beth-El and Ohev Zedeck, merged to form Congregation Beth-El Zedeck (BEZ).[187] The partnership was notable, considering the conflicts that existed between the Hungarian and Polish Jews at the turn of the century; yet the quarrels of the prior generation seemed to dissipate, while the realities of demography and geography led them to successfully join together.[188] The new congregation quickly shifted from modern Orthodoxy to left-wing Conservatism as congregants embraced the new musical melodies and a children's choir instituted by Cantor Glass, as well as Rabbi Steinberg's changes, including decorum and responsive readings in worship services, sermons in English on provocative topics of the day, and notably, a significant emphasis on the congregational Sunday school.[189] This emphasis on education was appropriate, not only because Conservative Judaism's founder, Solomon Schechter, insisted that every synagogue conduct an elementary Jewish school as part of its congregational function, but also because while in school at the Jewish

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had been elected with the backing of the Ku Klux Klan in 1924. Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 142-143.

[186] Congregation Beth-El first met Milton Steinberg when he came as a student to lead High Holiday services in 1927, while still a rabbinic student at JTS. Congregants were so impressed they offered him his first pulpit upon his impending graduation. Steinberg became one of the country's leading rabbis with a national reputation as a serious writer and lecturer; he contributed articles to magazines and journals and wrote four books: *The Making of the Modern Jew* (1934), a novel, *As a Driven Leaf* (1939), *A Partisan Guide to the Jewish Problem* (1945), and *Basic Judaism* (1947). Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 143, 280 fn.

[187] *Indiana Jewish Chronicle*, 25 March 1927. The East Market Street neighborhood around the Hungarian Congregation Ohev Zedeck was breaking up as its congregants increasingly moved northward as well. Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 143.

[188] Group identity still persisted, however, and the Hungarians refused to merge their section of the cemetery. Auerbach, "A Study of the Jewish Settlement in Indianapolis," 13; Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis,* 143.

[189] "Our History" in *Dedication of the Temple of Congregation Beth-El Zedeck*, 25-26.

Theological Seminary, Steinberg was most profoundly influenced by Mordecai Kaplan, dean of the Teacher's Institute and mentor to Samson Benderly.[190] During his years as Beth-El Zedeck's first rabbi (1927-1933), Steinberg "revolutionized the curriculum of the Religious School [and] adopted a definite syllabus;" his efforts raised the Sunday school enrollment to 275 and initiated a confirmation class and high school study group, both of which he taught.[191] The emphasis on the Sunday school, which was designed to supplement the JEA's afternoon program, and the introduction of a confirmation class, reflect ways in which the Conservative movement incorporated some of the same changes initiated by Reform Judaism, while BEZ's intense commitment to Zionism continued to mark the biggest difference between Conservatism and Reform.

The cessation of immigration during World War I and the restrictive quotas enacted in the 1920s, combined with the steady depletion of the south side Jewish community, led to shifts not only in the focus of Jewish education, but also in the way the organized community approached its programs and services. While the era of immigration required direct Federation expenditures for relief and Americanization programs, the end of this era enabled the Federation to refocus its activities and seek a new role in the Jewish community.[192] As a result, organized philanthropy began to shift from Americanization services that supported the newcomer to social, recreational, and educational programs for the Jewish middle class. Without newly arriving immigrants, there was no longer a consistent infusion of "old world" tradition and culture, which in

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[190] Solomon Grayzel, *A History of Contemporary Jews from 1900 to the Present* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1960), 165.

[191] "Our History" in *Dedication of the Temple of Congregation Beth-El Zedeck*, 25; Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis,* 141-144.

[192] The Federation's direct relief expenditures constituted 34.2 percent of the total budget in 1909-1910, 32.5 percent in 1914-1915, and then dropped to 17.8 percent in 1924-1925. Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 128, 130.

many ways had kept the overall effects of communal assimilation in check. In light of this, the new goal of communal programming was to maintain individual Jewish identity in order to create a sense of a particular Jewish community through learning and interacting with one another.

The Kirshbaum Community Center at 23rd and Meridian streets became the institution through which a new sense of community would be created for north side Jews. The new facility opened in 1926, a year after the Jewish Community Center Association was founded as a constituent agency under the Federation umbrella to operate both the Communal Building and the Kirshbaum Center. Because north side clientele were primarily American born or well-acculturated, the programs differed dramatically from those offered at the Communal Building, which continued to house English and naturalization classes, medical clinics, and relief operations, albeit on a much smaller scale than in prior decades. In contrast, the Kirshbaum Center instituted adult education programs, discussion groups, and lecture series on topics including Jewish history, European literature, beginning to advanced Hebrew, and current events.[193]

The 1920s witnessed exciting developments within the Indianapolis Jewish community. Having prospered economically and become solidly middle and even upper-middle class, more and more Jews relocated to the north side. These second generation East European Jews assumed leadership roles in broader communal affairs by serving on organization boards. Synagogues merged or made plans for expansion at new locations further north, and the Federation helped establish clearly defined constituent agencies,

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[193] Auerbach, "A Study of the Jewish Settlement in Indianapolis," 77, 85-93; Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 127-133. Formerly housing the Indianapolis Club, after renovation this large mansion included four meeting/classrooms, a lounge room, game room, gymnasium to seat 800, auditorium to seat 400, swimming pool with lockers and showers, basement with three bowling lanes, kitchen, and library with study tables and over 3,000 books.

including the Jewish Educational Association (JEA-1924), the Jewish Community Center Association (JCCA-1925), the Jewish Welfare Fund (JWF-1927), and the Jewish Family Service Society (JFSS-1928) to deliver the necessary programs and services so that it could focus on the annual fundraising campaign.[194]

Just as this momentum accelerated, the Great Depression hit and news began to surface regularly about the increasingly repressive policies of Nazi Germany against the Jews. Some German Jews managed to flee early, migrating to countries and cities all over the world. The few who came to Indianapolis, like their predecessors, needed some semblance of support and services to facilitate their integration into society. Moreover, the economic downturn slowed the northward migration and the established Jewish community in Indianapolis was reminded that it still had a job to do in providing services for coreligionists in need, although on a much smaller scale. Interestingly, the struggles and concerns of the 1930s brought Jews together. Jewish self-identification and solidarity increased as Jews bonded over the common concern about the fate of Jews abroad in Nazi Germany and Palestine, as well as the fate of Jews at home dealing with anti-Semitism and activities of the Ku Klux Klan. Additionally, many dealt with the anxiety (or boredom) brought on by the Depression with regular escapes to the Kirshbaum Center or Communal Building, resulting in a marked increase in membership at both locations.[195]

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[194] The Jewish Family Service Society became the professionally staffed relief arm of the Jewish Federation, handling all social service work including the summer health camp (Camp Ida Wineman), dealings with the schools, courts, employment bureaus and other social agencies. Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis,* 133-135.

[195] Gartner, *Jewish Education in the United States*, 24; Auerbach, "A Study of the Jewish Settlement in Indianapolis," 93; Forman, "A Study of the Jewish Communal Building of Indianapolis," 23.

1930s and Beyond: Examination and Growth Through Changing and Challenging Times

In the 1930s, Jewish education programs existed for Jewish children throughout Indianapolis regardless of religious affiliation or no affiliation. Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation (IHC) and Congregation Beth-El Zedeck (BEZ) each maintained Sunday schools, whose enrollments grew every year. These curricula included Jewish history, bible stories, and limited Hebrew, while focusing more on the practices and interpretations put forth by the particular denomination of Judaism, which meant a focus on how to navigate the prayer book and participate in the worship service, as well as certain customs and melodies. In addition to Sunday school, Conservative children were encouraged, but not required, to participate in the JEA's daily afternoon program, which was more intensive than Sunday school by focusing on Hebrew, as well as Talmud and other advanced religious texts. Orthodox children attended the daily afternoon Talmud Torah run by the JEA at either the north or south side branch. In addition, the Council Religious School conducted classes until 1938, at which time it moved to the Neustadt Building and came under the auspices of the JEA's curriculum and the Federation's dollars.[196]

By the end of the 1930s, Jewish educators in Indianapolis and all over the country could point with pride to achievements of the prior three decades: American Jewish education was well on its way to full Americanization in method, content, and administration, with better trained teachers, up-to-date facilities (rather than basement

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[196] JEA Board of Directors Minutes, 14 March, 6 July 1938, JEA Minutes (BV3368), IJHS, IHS; Forman, "A Study of the Jewish Communal Building of Indianapolis," 20. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s the Council Religious School continued to operate out of the Communal Building, educating children who were receiving no other religious instruction. In 1926, the school employed seven teachers (all women) and had an enrollment of 150 with an average attendance of 80 students. *Annual Report of the Jewish Federation of Indianapolis 1925-1926*, 10, 21, JWF, IHS.

vestry rooms), improved textbooks, broader courses of study, and more girls attending than ever before. The Indianapolis JEA could even boast an evening program for high school students with an enrollment of thirteen in 1939.[197]

Yet quantitative improvements could not make up for qualitative deficiency. Although the schools and programs existed, the limited number of hours of the three-day-a-week afternoon Hebrew school, let alone the one-day-a-week Sunday school, would only equip the average Jewish child with pieces of an adequate Judaic foundation. The most one could possibly achieve was an ability to follow along in the prayer book, a smattering of Hebrew words, phrases, and songs, and limited knowledge of Bible stories, ceremonies, and Jewish history; ultimately the schools were failing to develop the level of understanding, responsibility, or loyalty sought. Moreover, Jewish schools waged a losing battle against a number of realities: immigration cessation and a declining birthrate meant a smaller pool of children to educate, which resulted in declining enrollments, while those of school age were increasingly distracted by alternative options for their leisure time offered by other agencies and the public school.[198] Although parts of the Jewish community began to coalesce during the 1930s, the attitude toward Jewish education was lackluster among parents and children alike.

After World War II, not only did the attitude toward the necessity of Jewish education change, but the entire worldview of the American Jewish community shifted as well. In his comparison of the Israeli and American Jewish educational systems, Israeli

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[197] Most of the students who participated in this program lived on the north side and commuted every day to the south side Neustadt building for these classes. JEA Board of Directors Minutes, 13 November 1939, JEA Minutes (BV3368), IJHS, IHS.

[198] Ben-Horin, "From the Turn of the Century to the Late Thirties," 114-115; Isaac B. Berkson and Ben Rosen, "1936 Jewish Education Survey of Cleveland: Part I – Enrollment and Withdrawals," in Gartner, *Jewish Education in the United States*, 174-175.

educator Zvi Adar observed what all historians of American Jewish history do, that after World War II and the Holocaust,

> Jewish feeling and responsibility intensified for American Jewry when it became clear that it was the largest Jewish community in the world; the very fact of the destruction of East European Jewry obligated American Jewry to strengthen its Jewish roots and identification. Educationally, this revival was expressed in the massive expansion of the Jewish education network; and specifically in terms of the opening of schools alongside new synagogues.[199]

The American Jewish community made a conscious and explicit effort to eliminate negative expressions toward Judaism, such as anti-Semitism from without, and shame or lack of appreciation and knowledge from within. After decades of Americanization and integration, the notion of cultural pluralism once again took root and created a sort of religious revivalism in postwar Jewish communities. Proponents of cultural pluralism argued that Jews (or any minority group) best fulfilled their rights and duties as Americans by fostering their distinctive ancestral heritage in all of its forms.[200] Therefore, Jews could feel like they were not only being better Jews, but also better Americans, by affiliating with a synagogue or temple. The general populace experienced this postwar religious revivalism as well; for American Jews, "the perplexities of the modern age prompted many to engage in a search for a meaning to their Jewishness." Second-generation Jews who had moved to the suburbs to escape the old-world traditions of their immigrant parents joined synagogues in an effort to "reestablish some kind of

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[199] Zvi Adar, *Jewish Education in Israel and in the United States* (Jerusalem: Hamakor Press, 1977), 157 (translated by Barry Chazan).

[200] Abraham J. Karp, "Overview: The Synagogue in America – A Historical Typology" in *The American Synagogue: A Sanctuary Transformed,* ed. Jack Wertheimer (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 19-20; Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis,* 196; Gartner, *Jewish Education in the United States*, 14.

relationship with the Jewish group for the sake of their children."[201] This "for the sake of the children" attitude is indicative of what would be a growing sense of urgency among community leaders, educators, and parents about whether the third generation of American Jews, referred to as the "test generation," would successfully meet the challenge of preserving the continuity of Judaism, not just through individual and group identification, but through a commitment to Jewish literacy and a return to more traditional roots.[202]

Community leaders and educators felt the weight of forces described above, which translated into the monumental task of effectively engaging the third generation to ensure the survival of Judaism in America. Moreover, after years of neglect during the Depression and World War II, the Indianapolis Jewish community was acutely aware of the physical problems plaguing their religious schools. A series of self-studies undertaken by the JEA and IHC evidence the concern for future planning. IHC commissioned three surveys of its Sunday school in 1930, 1948, and 1954. Dr. Emanuel Gamoran (1895-1962), director of the Joint Commission on Jewish Education, conducted the first two surveys, and Dr. Sylan Schwatzman, professor of Jewish Religious Education at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, conducted the third. In 1944, the JEA enlisted the expertise of Dr. Leo L. Honor (1894-1956) to evaluate of the state of

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[201] Judah Pilch, "From the Early Forties to the Mid-Sixties," in *A History of Jewish Education in America,* ed. Judah Pilch (New York: American Association for Jewish Education, 1969), 120.

[202] Alexander Dushkin, "Fifty Years of American Jewish Education: Retrospect and Prospect," *Jewish Education* 60 (Spring 1993): 45, a reprint of Dushkin's opening address at the 40th Annual Conference of the National Council for Jewish Education in Jerusalem in 1966. Dushkin explains that the first generation was known as the "Bootstrap Generation," consisting of newcomers who raised themselves economically and socially. The second generation was known as the "Lost Generation" because, while still sensitive to the Jewish needs of their parents, they failed to recognize the need for knowledge of Judaism and Jewish culture. The challenge to the third or "Test Generation" would be whether they could reject assimilation while creating a positive Jewishly cultured community, based on "identification, commitment, *and* literacy."

communal Jewish education in Indianapolis. All three scholars examined the organizations thoroughly, considering their facilities, enrollment, attendance, curriculum, teacher training, parental involvement, and finances.[203]

At the time of IHC's first survey in 1930, the Sunday school enrolled an average of over 200 students, offering classes from primary grades to college. That tuition was free for children of both members and non-members of the congregation had always been policy, and the children of non-members accounted for over 40 percent of the children enrolled in 1929.[204] Gamoran's recommendations to IHC for improvement were

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[203] Emanuel Gamoran, "Report on Religious School of Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation" (typescript, 1930), Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation Archives, Indianapolis (hereafter cited as IHC); Emanuel Gamoran, "Survey of Jewish Education in Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation" (typescript, 1948), Folder 3, Box 47, IJHS, IHS; Sylvan Schwartzman, "Religious School Survey: Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation" (typescript, 1954), IHC; Leo L. Honor, "The Jewish Educational Association of Indianapolis, A Survey" (typescript, Spring 1944), Folder 10, Box 10, JWF, IHS. Gamoran and Honor were two of "Benderly's Boys," part of that cadre of students exposed to the teachings of Samson Benderly, Mordecai Kaplan, and John Dewey at the Jewish Theological Institute and Columbia. For forty years, Gamoran served as director of the Joint Commission on Jewish Education, which was established in 1923 by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Central Conference of American Rabbis (both national Reform organizations). As chief architect of Reform Jewish education he introduced traditional content into the training of teachers and induced fuller acceptance of Zionism and Hebrew in Reform religious schools. Gamoran created and oversaw an extensive program of textbook publications for all ages in multiple subjects. Leo Honor was known as the "teacher's teacher," always concerned about their problems and interests; during his career, he served as lecturer in history and education at the Teacher's Institute of JTS, the head of Jewish education in Chicago, professor of education at Dropsie College in Philadelphia, and as the first president of the National Council for Jewish Education. Judah Pilch, "Leading Jewish Educators of Blessed Memory," *Jewish Education* 40 (Spring 1971): 12-15; Jack Wertheimer, ed., *The American Synagogue: A Sanctuary Transformed* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 97.

[204] As would be expected, enrollment dropped during the Depression. Enrollment Records, 1928-29, IHC; Tevie Jacobs, "Bring a Nickel or Dime for Charity," *Indiana Jewish History* 25 (August 1989): 1-14. As a student in IHC's Sunday school from 1918 to 1920, Jacobs explains how the school began its policy of accepting children of non-members, almost all of whom were children of Orthodox immigrant parents, after IHC's failed attempt to operate a branch of the United Hebrew Schools in 1912. Tuition was free; teachers only suggested that children "bring a nickel or a dime for charity." For traditional Jewish families that did not live on the south side (Jacobs lived on West 26th Street), the daily after-school commute to the Neustadt building was nearly impossible. In IHC's Sunday school there was no Hebrew training or discussion of kosher dietary laws; "If there was any objection by our parents, I don't remember it. They probably figured that what we learned was much better than nothing...and there were practically no complaints!" Jacobs' memories of his experiences are warm, particularly the effective way that Rabbi Feuerlicht communicated to children during the special worship service he conducted every Sunday after school. Jacobs only attended IHC's Sunday school for two years, after which time his parents insisted he be tutored by a *melamed* and learn Hebrew in order to have a Bar Mitzvah. Jacobs joined IHC as an adult; sixty years later, as a member of the congregation's archives committee, he

straightforward: increase the length of school on Sundays from one-and-one-half to two-and-one-half hours and include at least forty-five minutes of Hebrew in all grade levels (there was currently an optional Hebrew course offered to high school students), institute a teacher training and development program, and cease the practice of automatically promoting children every year irrespective of their achievement or attendance. These suggestions directly reflect two critical issues for which Gamoran tirelessly advocated throughout his forty years as director of the Commission on Jewish Education: introducing traditional content into the Reform religious school curriculum (including Hebrew and even Zionism) and improving the status and capabilities of teachers through pedagogic training and Jewish education.[205]

In the eighteen years between the first and second survey, it appears IHC only managed to increase the length of school by a half hour, although an attempt was made to enlist the JEA's sponsorship in creating teachers training courses for all religious school teachers in Indianapolis. IHC's board did, however, regularly send the religious school teachers to area conferences and brought in speakers as well.[206] The school struggled to maintain enrollment over 200, and by the early 1940s was in dire need of more adequate facilities than the few small rooms that were poorly lit and heated within the 10th and Delaware streets synagogue. For over four years, the religious school committee

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discovered a card file titled "IHC Free Sunday School" and counted 461 cards of students who attended between 1912 and 1931.

[205] Pilch, "Leading Jewish Educators of Blessed Memory," 12-13.

[206] In 1934, IHC improved teaching training by hosting the 1934 convention of the Religious School Teachers' Association of Indiana and Ohio, sending Religious School Chair, Mildred Levy, to HUC's summer course for teachers; inviting Dr. Gamoran to give talks to teachers and parents about the role of the religious school and its relationship to the home, and by having Rabbi Feuerlicht hold monthly meetings with teachers to discuss problems. In 1946, IHC's board agreed to spend $250 to send all religious school teachers to Cleveland for the Sunday School Teachers Convention. Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation Board of Directors Minutes, 14 November 1933, 10 January, 28 May, 27 August 1934, 23 October 1946, IHC Minute Book, IHC.

clamored to hire an assistant rabbi who would serve as director of IHC's Sunday School; finally, in 1938, Rabbi Maurice Goldblatt was hired to assume that role. Goldblatt apparently favored his "outside" work as "ambassador to non-Jewish communities" more than his responsibilities to the school, as the religious school committee repeatedly requested the congregation employ an assistant director explicitly for the school.[207] Although conversations were replete about the issue of free tuition, the board consistently elected to maintain this policy.[208]

Although the IHC board frequently discussed the physical problems plaguing their old temple building, and the need to build a new structure farther north, the issue was repeatedly tabled.[209] But the poor facilities could no longer be tolerated by the religious school, which began renting space in the JEA's new building at 34th Street and Central Avenue.[210] When Dr. Gamoran returned to Indianapolis in 1948 to conduct the second survey, his list of recommendations was much more exhaustive. He once again called for an expansion of the program and an intensification of traditional Jewish content, including Hebrew. Specifically, Gamoran asserted that improvement of Jewish

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[207] Report of the Religious School Committee, 27 August 1934; Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation Board of Directors Minutes, 11 June, 6 November 1935, 15 July 1938, 19 December 1945, IHC Minute Book, IHC. In 1942, Rabbi Maurice Goldblatt was hired on a part-time basis to be the Public Relations Committee's first paid executive. (In 1947 the committee became the Jewish Community Relations Council and a constituent agency of the Jewish Federation.) Rabbi Goldblatt served on the executive committee of the Indianapolis Citizens' Council and the Race Relations Committee of the Church Federation; he was deputy chief chaplain for the Indianapolis Civilian Defense Organization and was appointed member of the Indiana War Records Commission by Governors Shricker and Gates; he helped organize the first "Institute on Judaism" for all Marion County ministers and the first Indianapolis Round Table for Christians and Jews; he also served as the first president of the Noble School for the Retarded. Within the Jewish community, Rabbi Goldblatt was active in B'nai B'rith, the Indianapolis Zionist district, the Jewish Family Services, and the JCC's Religious Affairs Committee. Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 178-79; Rosenberg, *To 120 Years!*, 75.

[208] Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation Board of Directors Minutes, 31 July 1939, 7 October 1940, 29 October 1946, IHC Minute Book, IHC.

[209] Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation Board of Directors Minutes, 6 October 1943, 9 August, 20 December 1944, 31 January 1945, 27 March 1946, IHC Minute Book, IHC.

[210] Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation Board of Directors Minutes, 4 April, 16 May, 12 September 1945, 27 March 1946, IHC Minute Book, IHC.

education in the Reform congregation would need to involve the following: 1) establishing a nursery class, a kindergarten, a fifth-through-eighth-grade junior congregation, a four-year high school program, and a parent organization; 2) extending the length from two hours to two-and-one-half hours on Sunday mornings; 3) adding a pre-confirmation level, postponing confirmation from the age of fourteen to sixteen, and increasing the requirement for graduation to three years minimum, meeting twice a week instead of just once; 4) incorporating Hebrew as a regular part of studies in all grades; 5) providing teacher training courses; 6) hiring teachers specialized in music, arts and crafts, and dramatics; and 7) providing "parental education" to teach how to create a Jewish home with respect to certain ritual objects and holiday celebrations, and developing a Jewish library. Gamoran again suggested that the congregation relocate farther north, making sure to provide sufficient space for a school.[211]

While Gamoran's recommendations for IHC called for an expansion of their religious school program and an intensification of traditional Jewish education, Dr. Leo Honor's suggestions for the JEA emphasized Jewish life over Jewish texts, constituting a loosening of the reins of traditional Jewish education. This likely was not the expected outcome, considering the impetus to inviting Honor was to address the damaging rift that had materialized between the JEA's south side community and BEZ leaders, as well as questions over the utility of maintaining the south side branch. Honor's recommendations regarding the Neustadt building were clear:

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[211] Gamoran, "Survey of Jewish Education in Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation," IJHS, IHS. In 1958 IHC members acted on that final recommendation when they moved from their 10th and Delaware streets location to the newly built temple at 65th and North Meridian streets. Historian Meir Ben-Horin explains that one of Gamoran's significant contributions to Reform Jewish education was his emphasis on both transforming the curriculum from one of subjects to one of activities through customs, ceremonies, songs and current events, and stressing the selection of two categories of values: 1) humanistic – those of general human worth like justice, and 2) survival – those that have preserved Jewish life through the ages, like Shabbat. Meir Ben-Horin, "From the Turn of the Century to the Late Thirties," 112.

> It is not fit for school purposes...the entire atmosphere is one of dirt and squalor. Instruction carried under such auspices, even if it is of the highest caliber, can only lead to the ultimate feeling with the child that his Jewish contact was uninspiring – even a disheartening experience...Abandon the Neustadt building at once."[212]

Honor further suggested busing south side students to the north side branch, but the biggest issue to address was the location of where the north side branch should be. By 1944 JEA classes on the north side were being conducted out of Congregation Beth-El Zedeck, having been moved from the Kirshbaum Center in 1942. The question was whether the communal school should be housed within a congregation.

Friction had been brewing for over a decade between BEZ members who served on the JEA board, and those board members representing south side Orthodox congregations, as well as the JEA staff. By 1932, BEZ already had 285 children enrolled in its Sunday school, whereas barely sixty students attended the north side branch of the JEA.[213] The most significant reason for the enrollment discrepancy, particularly during the Depression years, was because synagogue membership included free tuition to Sunday school, whereas the JEA charged for its weekday afternoon program. Still, north side JEA board members insisted that the communal school would be more effective and therefore more attractive to BEZ children if the *ivrit b'ivrit* method of teaching all subjects in Hebrew was used only for the most advanced students. Surprisingly, the opposition to the *ivrit b'ivrit* system was led by Daniel Frisch, who a decade earlier had argued passionately for its use while deriding the popularity of the Sunday school. Opponents now argued that the limited hours each week prohibited the acquisition of

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[212] Honor, "Jewish Educational Association of Indianapolis," 26-27.
[213] Auerbach, "A Study of the Jewish Settlement in Indianapolis," 14-15; Gallin, "Jewish Education in Indianapolis," 2.

sufficient Hebrew skills, and "because instruction is all in Hebrew they cannot possibly learn the knowledge necessary to make them good Jews."[214]

In an attempt to address the paucity-of-time issue, JEA Director Gallin tried increasing the number of hours incrementally each year, from five hours per week during the students' first two years, up to seven-and-a-half hours during the fifth and sixth years of study. But parents of both the north and south side students rejected this recommendation, opting instead for additional recreational time for their children. According to JEA minutes, in 1931 the board approved the implementation of a dual system where a small group of the most advanced and committed students would learn through *ivrit b'ivrit,* and the rest would learn through English. It was apparent that since Hebrew competence was nearly impossible to achieve, time and effort would be better spent to advance a curriculum taught in English based on English texts.[215] And that curriculum should focus less on modern Hebrew altogether, and emphasize the skills for synagogue participation. For Jews of German descent affiliated with IHC, synagogue membership and attendance had always been a significant aspect of a positive American Jewish identity; this debate between the JEA and BEZ reveals that Jews of East European descent were now making it a considerable factor in their definition of Jewish identity as well.

Curriculum disputes between JEA staff and among north and south side board members continued throughout the 1930s, coming to a head early in the 1940s. BEZ created a committee on educational facilities, which passed a resolution calling for the

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[214] JEA Board of Directors Minutes, 28 September 1931, JEA Minutes (BV3368), IJHS, IHS; Gallin, "Jewish Education in Indianapolis," 9.

[215] Gartner, *Jewish Education in the United States*, 32; Walter Ackerman, "Toward a History of the Curriculum of the Conservative Congregational School, Part II," *Jewish Education* 48 (Summer 1980): 13.

afternoon school to be moved to their synagogue "in order to spread the spiritual influence of education from the synagogue and the school to the home and to broaden and deepen the Jewish loyalties of the families of Beth-El Zedeck Congregation." They asserted that "it is ultimately immaterial where the school meets, provided the greatest good can be gotten," and that the JEA and entire community would benefit because their building is more centrally located (34th and Ruckle vs. 23rd and Meridian); moreover, enrollment would increase because congregational members would be more likely to send their children to the school if it were housed in the synagogue.

JEA proponents, however, argued that moving the school would jeopardize its very existence as a communal enterprise on neutral ground because members of other congregations would not want to send their children to a school housed at BEZ. Additionally, they were concerned the Jewish Welfare Fund would withdraw its financial support, thereby guaranteeing the school's demise. Although the motion to move the school failed in 1940, it was brought up for a vote again in 1942, after BEZ hired its own Hebrew teacher and threatened to open its own afternoon school. The motion to house the JEA within BEZ passed 12-5, against vocal objections from members of both the Reform and Orthodox community, including IHC Rabbi Maurice Goldblatt and south side Orthodox leaders, both of whom insisted that the school would immediately become a Conservative congregational school and abandon the emphasis on Hebrew and Biblical text study. However, enough board members were persuaded by the promises of newly hired BEZ Rabbi Israel Chodos, that the JEA's autonomy would be respected and that there would be no attempt at Conservative indoctrination. One board member finally acquiesced "first because the location is much more advantageous, and secondly because

it will bring harmony."[216] But harmony it failed to bring, and within months of the move, Rabbi Chodos insisted that the curriculum of the north side branch be revised to shift the emphasis from "linguistic knowledge...[to] prepar[ing] the child for the Synagogue."[217]

After conducting his survey of the JEA in 1944, Leo Honor offered dozens of recommendations for improving the school that pointed to quality over quantity in training the Jewish child in "the art of Jewish living." He insisted that rote memorization and over-emphasis on mechanical preparation for service participation should be eliminated because it "leads to the killing of the desire within the child to participate actively in the synagogue...there is the danger that in our anxiety to train '*daveners,*' we kill the desire to '*daven.*'" Honor suggested shortening the six-year program to four or five years so that students would experience the positive reinforcement of a graduation ceremony sooner, and (probably to Gallin's surprise) he encouraged the implementation the dual system of teaching in both English and Hebrew.[218] He also urged the community to "drop" the "unreal issue of 'synagogue' versus 'school' or Hebraism versus Judaism" and recognize "that there is no conflict in goals but only in relation to the methods." In his lectures and writings, Honor stressed the concept of "unity in diversity," asserting that varying opinions within Jewish education could actually strengthen the cause if the common goals pursued by all – namely, to shape a positive and lasting Jewish identity – were recognized as underlying any differences. And finally, he advocated that both the south side Neustadt building and the Beth-El quarters be abandoned in favor of a single

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[216] "Resolution Adopted by Beth-El Sub-Committee on Educational Facilities" (no date), BJE; Joint Meeting of Committees Representing Beth-El Congregation and the JEA," 11 July, 24 July 1940, BJE; JEA Board of Directors Minutes, 12 October 1942, BJE; Gallin, "Jewish Education in Indianapolis," 4-5.

[217] JEA Board of Directors Minutes, 14 January 1943, JEA Minutes (BV3368), IJHS, IHS.

[218] "Daven" is Yiddish for "pray." Honor felt that graduation after four years would actually increase the likelihood of children continuing their Jewish studies in a separate high school program; he also felt sure that with a dual system in place, the majority of students would be able to handle the *ivrit b'ivrit* track of study. Honor, "The Jewish Educational Association of Indianapolis," 6-11, 34.

neutral location: "only a congregational school should be housed in synagogue quarters."[219]

In the spring of 1945, within less than a year of Honor's survey, the community celebrated the dedication of a new JEA building, a remodeled two-story house located at 34th Street and Central Avenue. The JEA also heeded Honor's recommendation to better address educational needs of the entire community by directing more energy toward consulting and assisting other agencies and congregations in educational and cultural programs, providing adult lecture series in history and customs, sponsoring educational forums for all religious school teachers, and conducting summer day camps in cooperation with the Kirshbaum Center.[220] The commissioning of these surveys by the JEA and IHC points to the community's willingness to make changes in the face of a growing awareness of how Jewish education plays a central role in the creation of a positive Jewish identity.

As the JEA and BEZ came to some terms with their differences and settled into their new building, a faction of frustrated IHC congregants, who were not as willing to make changes, was growing. This group felt that Rabbi Goldblatt, who had been promoted to senior rabbi in 1946 with the retirement of Rabbi Feuerlicht, was leading the congregation away from the classical Reform model of Judaism. Throughout his seventeen years with IHC, Goldblatt had detractors, many of whom were already fourth generation Jews in America; for this group, the definition of American Jewish identity should not include anything that might call into question Jews' loyalty to America or

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[219] Honor, "The Jewish Educational Association of Indianapolis," 11-12, 28, 35; Pilch, "Leading Jewish Educators of Blessed Memory," 14.

[220] The new JEA building included classrooms, a lecture room, a waiting room, library, administrative offices, chapel, playroom, and kitchen. Honor spoke at the dedication ceremony. *Indiana Jewish Chronicle*, 2 March 1945.

their commitment to complete integration into society-at-large. They therefore took issue with Rabbi Goldblatt's support of Zionism and the insertion of Israel and more Jewish holidays and traditions into the religious school curriculum. Within the worship ceremony, some congregants disdained the introduction or reinstatement of various customs such as the Bar Mitzvah ceremony (as well as a new Bat Mitzvah ceremony for girls), increasing the age for confirmation from thirteen to fourteen years, and lighting Shabbat candles, reading from the Torah, and saying the *Kiddush* blessing during Friday night services. Although by mid-century Reform Judaism, as a movement, was clearly embracing the revitalization of traditional Jewish practices, it was a difficult shift to make for those adherents who had grown up in a very classical Reform temple, which IHC had been.[221] In 1953, a group of IHC families broke away and organized their own Sunday school, which they called the School for Reform Judaism. They conducted classes in the JEA building and operated for three years with sixty-five students.[222] This "dissident" group felt that IHC's Sunday school curriculum over-emphasized traditional Jewish practices, anti-Semitism and persecution in Jewish history, as well as the role of Israel; they endorsed materials created by the American Council for Judaism, which preserved classical Reform customs and was considered by some to be "anti-Zionist."[223]

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[221] Goldblatt also recommended employing a cantor, which was voted down 155-2. The congregation hired its first cantor in 1971. Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation Board of Directors Minutes, 19 December 1945, 26 November 1946, IHC Minute Book, IHC; *Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation 125th Anniversary: 1856-1981* (pamphlet), 10, IHC; Rosenberg, *To 120 Years!,* 79, 81, 86-87; Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis,* 238.

[222] After much discussion among JEA and Federation board members, and making sure the community understood that the JEA was in no way sponsoring the break-away Sunday school, the JEA allotted the break-away group from IHC space in the JEA building. Rabbi Goldblatt was furious. Interview with Julian Freeman, Endelman Papers, Box 4, Folder 14, IHS; Rosenberg, *To 120 Years!,* 83; Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis,* 195.

[223] The group actually maintained their IHC membership during the split, and even went so far as to ask for IHC's support, since the school was being organized on an experimental basis. Of course the board refused to sponsor a school not under the jurisdiction of the rabbi. Break-away Sunday schools spurred

Meanwhile, IHC enlisted the help of a Hebrew Union College education professor, Sylvan Schwartzman, to survey the school and consult during a process of reorganization in 1954 and 1955. After learning that the school changed its physical location multiple times (from the JEA building to the Kirshbaum Center, then to the Radio Building on the State Fairgrounds and the Orchard School located on West 43rd Street) Schwartzman implored the congregation to find or build a new location that would ideally be permanent, modern, and attached to a new temple building itself, explaining how critical it is for young congregants and their parents to have regular contact with the synagogue as a result of the school's existence within it. Schwartzman also recommended: 1) adding two to three years of Hebrew to the curriculum and an additional half hour of instruction for the upper grades; 2) learning and incorporating modern pedagogical techniques, through teacher training institutes, that involve creative activities, audio-visual aids, living experiences, and even overnight class field trips; and 3) improving communication between parents, congregants, and the decision-making groups, including the board, religious school committee, and teachers through regular meetings, open houses, and adult Jewish education courses for parents.[224] The congregation responded immediately, reorganizing the religious school committee, which then began meeting regularly with Schwartzman and the teachers to develop a new child-centered curriculum and participate in all-day teacher institutes and pedagogy courses.

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by guidance of the American Council for Judaism surfaced in New York, Chicago, St. Louis, and Milwaukee. Rosenberg, *To 120 Years!*, 81-88.

[224] Sylvan Schwartzman, "Religious School Survey: Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation" (typescript, 1954), IHC.

Congregants Amy Cook served as full-time "unpaid" principal and Bea Fink coordinated the implementation of the new curriculum.[225]

Rabbi Goldblatt justified the Sunday school's approach and curriculum in a 1954 sermon on the subject, which was mimeographed and distributed to all members of the congregation. His insights pointed to how and why the Reform movement incorporated not only events like the Holocaust and the founding of the State of Israel, but also more Jewish traditions and Hebrew into religious school curricula. Aims included:

> Giving our children a positive attitude toward Judaism. By this statement we indicate our desire that our children develop no kind of inferiority feeling because they are Jews. [Our] ages-old religious tradition...teaches character and integrity, good citizenship and democratic living... Developing of a love for Jewish religious worship...Children necessarily must [be] familiar with some of the Hebrew prayers of regular worship...Throughout this instruction emphasis is on participation. Instilling a feeling of kinship with and responsibility for all Jews everywhere in the world. This idea of kinship is not a product of Hitlerism or of Zionism. Jews have felt a sense of responsibility toward each other for a long time... We cannot avoid the experiences of the Jewish people which have been marked by suffering and tragedy... Closing our eyes to them will not eliminate them nor will it lead to understanding them... We have a sense of loyalty for Jews everywhere no matter their affiliation, including the Jews of Israel who have established a new state [and] are making a new life for themselves... Encouraging parents to take a greater share in the religious education of their children... The home needs to reflect the same teaching of Judaism found in the religious school and in the sanctuary. Unless parents support the teachers and the rabbi in their endeavors, the teachers labor in vain.[226]

Aware that the rift within the congregation over the religious school would likely not heal with him at the helm, Rabbi Goldblatt resigned in 1955. Twenty years later, he reflected

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[225] The IHC board eagerly followed Schwartzman's recommendation to solve a dispute between Rabbi Goldblatt and the religious school committee about whether to hire an assistant rabbi or educational director, by engaging current HUC rabbinical students, who would come to Indianapolis on a weekly basis to serve as educational director for the school, and assist Rabbi Goldblatt during the High Holidays. IHC was served by Samuel Karff (1954), who was the first student trained as an educational director to come out of HUC, followed by Larry Meyers (1955) and Jerome Davidson (1957). Rosenberg, *To 120 Years!*, 81-82.

[226] Rabbi Maurice Goldblatt, "The Aims of the Curriculum of the Religious School of the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation" (typescript, 1954), Folder 3, Box 47, IJHS, IHS.

on this episode during his tenure: "They won the war against the rabbi but they lost the battle against the curriculum. Post-Goldblatt their children re-enrolled in the Temple School, which followed the curriculum against which they had revolted." Soon after Rabbi Maurice Davis was hired in 1957, the dissenting group did indeed return to IHC.[227]

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

Much about Jewish education in America changed after the Holocaust and the founding of the State of Israel. This was due to the pressure American Jewry felt to ensure the survival of Judaism, as well as the demographic realities that propelled the synagogue and its religious school into the dominant communal institutions. Yet some goals ultimately were the same both in 1920 and 1950: to inculcate youth with Jewish ideals, history, and customs in order to create proud Jews with a positive Jewish identity who could confidently combat anti-Semitism while contributing to American society and democracy. At the 1945 dedication ceremony of the JEA's new building, Director Meyer Gallin reminded guests that:

> We are trying to prepare our children to live in the world of tomorrow, not only by giving them a knowledge of our Jewish traditions...but what is also just as important, an inner security, so they can meet anti-Semitism with knowledge and intelligence, and be happy with their Jewishness. We want them to be assets, both to the Jewish and non-Jewish community, and to grow up as good, loyal, upstanding Jews and proud Americans.[228]

Yet even as the underlying goal remained the same, the approach and curricula changed in many ways, as did the definition of the ideal American Jewish identity. The surveys examined in this chapter reveal a shift in philosophy on the parts of both IHC and

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[227] Rosenberg, *To 120 Years!,* 83-84, 86-88 (quote p. 87). In August 1977, the Rosenbergs invited Rabbi Goldblatt to reflect on his association with IHC; they printed his commentary in full in *To 120 Years!*.

[228] *Indiana Jewish Chronicle,* 2 March 1945.

JEA toward each other: while the JEA was encouraged to remove some of its traditional "baggage," IHC was encouraged to intensify the Judaic content in its curriculum. Both sets of recommendations purported to improve Jewish education by providing students with the tools with which to maintain a Jewish life inside and outside the synagogue, and to be proud of doing so. Ultimately, Jewish educational institutions in Indianapolis sought to create a "mainstream" and effective approach in order to attract the most possible students. In 1953, incoming JEA president David Hollander boasted that although some people in the community complained that the JEA's Hebrew education was insufficient and others felt Hebrew was over-emphasized, the "JEA [successfully] meets the middle road and makes the attempt to balance and create good Jews."[229] Eventually all educational institutions across denominational lines included in their curricula Hebrew, anti-Semitism and the Holocaust, Zionism and Israel, current events, and issues concerning Jewish existence in the non-Jewish world. While the congregational schools emphasized the practices and interpretations of their own particular group on Sundays, the JEA provided instruction in Hebrew language, prayer, Bible, and Jewish history on weekday afternoons.

> In moving from the city to the suburbs, Jews had to become self-conscious about religion. Such questions as "Why am I a Jew" inevitably arose, and it was harder to answer them in the middle-class suburb where everyone looked alike than in the urban neighborhood where the ethnic groups were marked by outer characteristics.[230]

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[229] Hollander went on to echo Gallin's statement from a decade prior: "We are living in a complex world and regardless of how liberal we may be, it is our business to see that our children are informed and can give intelligent answers. Intelligent Jewish youngsters can find their way in the world without being ashamed of their Jewishness." JEA Board of Directors Minutes, 23 April 1953, JEA Minutes (BV3368), IJHS, IHS.

[230] Glazer, *American Judaism*, 119.

Suburbanization significantly impacted the intensity of Jewish education, as parents and children turned to Jewish schools for answers to questions about "why" and "how" to be Jewish. The congregational school was more attractive to new suburbanites than the communal Hebrew school because it catered to the needs and life-cycle events of the entire family. In the 1950s, secular Jewish organizations declined, such as those affiliated with the far political left and unaffiliated education programs, while synagogues dramatically expanded with respect to membership, size of facility, and overall functions. The rapid rise in the number of synagogues and temples in America was clearly a result of suburbanization and the postwar "baby boom." Those whose plans to move northward were initially thwarted by the realities of the Depression and war, migrated after the war; but already in 1932, it was estimated that only 25 percent of the less than 7,000 Indianapolis Jews still lived on the south side, with 65 percent living on the north side and 10 percent in other areas. By 1950, less than 9 percent of 9,000 Jews lived on Indianapolis' south side.[231]

Like Americans in general, Jews had their "baby boom" too, which resulted in overflowing Jewish school classrooms throughout the 1950s.[232] Membership in BEZ doubled between 1945 and 1958 (to 760 families), and religious school enrollment soared to 450 by 1954.[233] Between 1949 and 1959, IHC's religious school enrollment increased

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[231] Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 116; *Indianapolis News,* 28 October 1950. A 1948 population survey of the Indianapolis Jewish community specified the areas of settlement in more detail, showing that 11.5 percent lived on the south side, 4 percent on the lower north (10th through 21st streets), 5 percent in the center (21st to Fall Creek), 29 percent in the central-north (Fall Creek to Maple), 37 percent on the far north side (north of Maple to city limits), and 13.5 percent scattered. "Survey Report on Information, Educational and Recreational Activities of the Jewish Community of Indianapolis," National Jewish Welfare Board (typescript, October 1948), 31, Box 492, AJA.

[232] Gartner, *Jewish Education in the United States*, 26.

[233] Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 196, 197; *Indianapolis Times*, 19 November 1954.

112 percent, from 232 to 498.[234] While only 23 percent of IHC's members sent their children to the Sunday school in 1943, 65 percent did so in 1956, largely as a result of the baby-boomers reaching elementary school age.[235] By the mid-1960s, congregations came to dominate Jewish education, maintaining more than 90 percent of the Jewish schools in the United States, which taught over 50 percent of all Jewish children.[236] Notably in Indianapolis, however, the JEA's communal program still attracted 44 percent of Jewish youth in 1948, compared to 30 percent who attended only a Sunday school.[237]

Throughout this period of suburbanization and massive synagogue growth, the communal approach to education in Indianapolis found itself challenged, but not seriously threatened. Prior to the rise of denominationalism, it was not considered a threat to the autonomy of the JEA to house it within a congregation. At those times when the JEA was housed in a congregation, it was because alternate facilities were unavailable. But as congregations sought members and worked to secure loyalty, not just to Judaism, but to their particular branch and their particular synagogue, fragmentation leading to actual conflict was more apt to result. In cities larger than Indianapolis, dozens of synagogues and temples emerged during the postwar suburbanization baby-boom period, each with its own school attached, leading to the near disappearance of the community Hebrew school. In Indianapolis, however, although the move northward and synagogue growth was significant, it did not come at the total expense of the communal school. The size of individual congregations was simply not large enough for each to support its own weekday school, thereby necessitating the role played by the JEA as

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[234] Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 198.
[235] "Religious School Past and Future," report dated September 24, 1956, Folder 3, Box 47, IJHS, IHS.
[236] Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 197.
[237] "Survey Report on Information, Educational and Recreational Activities of the Jewish Community of Indianapolis," 34, AJA.

communal enterprise, and making Indianapolis one of a small number of cities to continue to maintain its communal school under Federation auspices.[238] This meant that attempts at break-away programs were never sustainable; whether it was old world traditionalists establishing the Indianapolis Talmud Torah in the mid-1920s, BEZ hiring an educational director to teach Hebrew during the week and threatening to establish a completely separate school in the early 1940s, or the IHC group breaking away to form its own Sunday School in the mid-1950s, the dissatisfied group eventually worked its way back into the mainstream because the community simply was not large enough to support viable "competition" among educational institutions.

Yet despite the resurgence in Jewish education and rising enrollment numbers, poor attendance at both the congregational schools and JEA's afternoon school attest to the fact that in practice, Jewish parents were not making Jewish education a priority for their children.[239] Moreover, the "mainstream" approach of the JEA became increasingly unsatisfactory for Orthodox Jews, who were disappointed that the United Hebrew Schools, and the JEA as its successor, lost its strict Orthodox adherence once assuming its place under the Federation umbrella. The United Hebrew Schools was the first cooperative venture and creation of immigrant East European Jews; it came from within, rather from without (read: Federation). The educational ideas brought by the immigrants themselves significantly influenced the shape of Jewish Education in America in the early decades of the twentieth century by insisting on the communal approach to Hebrew-centered Jewish education. As the Indianapolis Jewish community continued its northward migration and expansion during the 1960s, the Orthodox community would

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[238] Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 204.

[239] "Self-Study Report," Jewish Education Association of Indianapolis (Indianapolis, 1966), JWF, IHS; Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis,* 204-205.

once again turn inward to be innovative in filling unmet Jewish educational needs. The question was whether a community of Indianapolis' size could support another educational institution: the day school.

CHAPTER 4

THE PRIVATE JEWISH DAY SCHOOL: THE HEBREW ACADEMY OF INDIANAPOLIS

THE GROWTH OF THE DAY SCHOOL MOVEMENT

The same factors that led to the rise of the supplementary synagogue Sunday school and communal afternoon school after World War II, also led to the growth of Jewish day schools. Day schools are private institutions that integrate Hebrew, Jewish, and general/secular education, all day, five days a week. These growth factors included the impact of the Holocaust and the founding of the State of Israel on the consciousness of American Jews, along with the postwar religious revivalism that was coupled with a renewed endorsement of ethnic and cultural pluralism as Jews settled in suburbia. A significant factor in the initial growth of the day school movement was the immigration of Hasidic Jews from Eastern Europe who either escaped Nazi persecution before the war or survived the Holocaust. Zealously devoted to traditional learning, they were determined to provide an intensive Jewish education for their children and worked to replace the Jewish centers of learning that were destroyed in Eastern Europe through American day schools and *yeshivot* (institutions for higher Jewish learning).[240]

In 1944, the National Society for Hebrew Day Schools, known as Torah Umesorah (Torah and Tradition), was established in New York as the organization to create and help support Orthodox-oriented day schools throughout North America. From

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[240] Alvin Schiff, "From Sunday School to Day School," *Jewish Education* 50 (Summer 1982): 11; Alvin Schiff, "On the Status of All-Day Jewish Education," *Jewish Education* 51 (Spring 1983): 3; Alvin Schiff, "The Jewish Day School – the Next Half-Century," *Judaism* 36 (Spring 1987): 221; Judah Pilch, "From the Early Forties to the Mid-Sixties," 141; Doniel Zvi Kramer, *The Day Schools and Torah Umesorah: The Seeding of Traditional Judaism in America* (New York: Yeshiva University Press, 1984), 17; Oscar Janowsky, "Jewish Education: Achievements, Problems and Needs," in *The American Jew: A Reappraisal,* ed. Oscar Janowsky (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1972), 142.

the outset, Torah Umesorah granted full supervisory control of all religious problems, functions, and purposes to a body of fifteen Orthodox rabbis, confirming that Orthodoxy would be at the forefront of expanding the day school movement.[241] As a result of the factors described above and the intense promotional campaign undertaken by Torah Umesorah, the number of Jewish elementary day schools and Jewish high schools in the United States and Canada increased from 30 in 1944 to 400 in 1969.[242] Unlike supplementary religious schools, however, whose enrollments declined after peaking in the early 1960s, day school enrollment increased through the 1970s into the 1980s. Between 1962 and 1982, the number of pupils enrolled in congregational Sunday schools and weekday afternoon schools decreased 60 percent and 52 percent respectively, while day school enrollment increased 139 percent. By the early 1980s, day schools accounted for nearly 33 percent of all Jewish school enrollments in America, up from 8 percent in 1958.[243]

During the 1950s and 1960s, Jewish education in America was deceptively contradictory. While new and modern suburban structures housed overflowing supplementary education programs, and Americanized teachers incorporated the

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[241] Kramer, *The Day Schools and Torah Umesorah*, 10-14.

[242] Kramer, *The Day Schools and Torah Umesorah,* 38-40; Alexander Dushkin, "Fifty Years of American Jewish Education: Retrospect and Prospect," *Jewish Education* 60 (Spring 1993): 47. (This was a reprint of Dushkin's opening address for the 40th Annual Conference of the National Council for Jewish Education in Jerusalem, July 1966.) According to Kramer, nearly 200 of the 400 schools were located in New York while the rest were in 29 states and 114 communities.

[243] These percentages are based on the following numbers: In 1962 there were 270,000 students enrolled in Sunday schools and 250,000 in weekday afternoon schools; in 1982 there were 100,000 in Sunday schools and 120,000 in afternoon schools. Day school enrollment increased from 40,000 in 1968 to 117,000 in 1982, at which time there were 636 all day schools in 36 states and 5 Canadian provinces; over half of the schools, however, were located in Greater New York. In 1957, the Conservative movement founded Solomon Shechter day schools. In 1982, 85 percent of day school enrollees attended Orthodox institutions, 9 percent in Conservative, 3 percent in schools under communal auspices, 1.5 percent in Reform, and 1.5 percent in secular sponsored schools. Schiff, "From Sunday School to Day School," 11, 12; Schiff, "On the Status of All-Day Jewish Education," 2-3; Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis,* 226.

Holocaust and Zionism into the curriculum, reports and surveys showed that the hours of schooling and the total number of years enrolled were decreasing, and graduates were illiterate in Jewish matters and lacked a positive Jewish identification. Additionally, teachers remained underpaid, undervalued, and increasingly difficult to recruit. The oft-quoted 1959 American Association for Jewish Education Report asserted that Jewish education in the United States "is like a shallow river, 'a mile wide and an inch deep.'"[244]

More and more Jewish educators and sociologists began insisting that the answer to strengthening Jewish education and ensuring the future of Judaism in America would be found within the intensive setting of the all day school. Their pleas mostly fell on deaf ears. The overwhelming majority of American Jews were consumed with social activism during the civil rights movement and ever-concerned with protecting their finally assumed place of acceptance within gentile society. Leonard Fein, a Reform Jewish political science professor, magazine editor, and well-known spokesperson of the "Jewish condition," decried that the path of assimilation spelled doom for Judaism in America. In his 1968 speech to the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, Fein called for a revolution in Jewish education to ensure the survival of American Jewry:

> ...Young people learn at least as much from what we do with ourselves as they learn from what we teach in the classroom, and the decisive message of our actions is that Jewish education is the trivial concern of dreary people....Jewish educational institutions, though staffed by men and women of surpassing commitment and devotion, are a disaster, intellectually sterile, pedagogically retarded, uncertain of where they are going, and incapable of getting there...[The] insidious tendency [to] assess relevance [in Jewish education] in terms of "what will the Gentiles say?"...produces gross distortions of judgment, and...despite all the efforts to sustain a Judaism that is distinctive, the general stance of our community remains, in its core, a public relations stance...In our lover's quarrel with Christian America, our basic argument has been that Jews deserve to be accepted because Jews are like everybody else. In order to

[244] Julius Weinberg, "The 'Greening' of Jewish Education," *Judaism* 34 (Spring 1985): 181-183.

> win a place in the American sun, we have felt it necessary to demonstrate our oneness with America. But ladies and gentlemen, we have won our place in the American sun, beyond all questions. The quarrel is over. What was, perhaps, a useful approach a generation ago is now a suicidal anachronism...In short, the mark between Jewish and American is a hyphen, not an equal sign...So long as the thrust of the Jewish communal stance remains the urge to dine at the table of the Gentiles, so long will Jewish education remain a meaningless enterprise.[245]

During the 1960s, the decline of supplementary programs resulted from the decreasing birth rate, the realization of the serious limitations of weekly education that consisted of only one to three days and two to six hours of instruction, and the growing apathy of Jewish parents regarding Jewish education for their children.[246] Yet the day school movement continued to forge ahead for the exact opposite reasons that the supplementary school declined: the birth rate among Orthodox Jews continued to increase, the daily intensive format of the day school directly addressed the need for more time to commit to Jewish studies, and those parents choosing the day school were engaged and more concerned about the intensity of Jewish education for their children.

Significant events unfolding outside the American Jewish community also fueled the acceptance and expansion of day schools. The impact of the 1967 Israeli defeat of its Arab neighbors in the Six Day War is regarded as another turning point in American Jewish history. Just as the realities of the Holocaust and founding of the State of Israel ignited American Jews' identification with world Jewry and sense of responsibility to ensure the survival of Judaism, the Israeli victory in 1967 brought joy and relief to Jews

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[245] Leonard Fein, "Herbert R. Abeles Memorial Address to the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds" in *Reflections of Jewish Commitment and Education* (1968), 211-220. Fein was a political science professor at MIT and best known as founder and publisher of *Moment* magazine; he is still recognized as one of the most compelling orators in diagnosing the Jewish condition. In 1980 he visited the Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis, and expressed his support of day schools. Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the HAI, Inc., 25 March 1980, Files of the Hasten Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis (hereafter cited as HHAI).

[246] Schiff, "From Sunday School to Day School," 11.

all over the world and elicited an emotional awakening to the strength of their bond with the Jewish State and a sense of pride in their own Jewish identity. The 1973 Yom Kippur War further intensified attitudes of solidarity with Israel and reinforced a sense of unity among Jewish people.[247]

Major developments in both the American and Jewish American scene coincided with ongoing threats to Israel since its founding in 1948. Jewish groups and individual Jews were proud to be social activists and to be counted among the leaders of the civil rights movement during the 1950s and 1960s. After decades of creating partnerships and dialogue across racial and religious lines, and at a time when anti-Semitism was seemingly at a low in the United States, the American Jewish community was shocked and deeply hurt by the response of both black and white groups to the happenings in Israel. Some churches were silent in the face of Arab terrorism against Israel and others criticized Israel's use of force, while the rising militant black power movement denounced Israel as an oppressor state and scattered incidents of black anti-Semitism began to occur.[248]

"Jews were frightened and turned inward – once inward, they recognized how little they knew of their own religion and heritage."[249] The result was a renewed effort to enhance Jewish identity through strengthening Jewish education.[250] The turn inward, however, by no means limited the influence of a new educational philosophy taking hold

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[247] Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis,* 220; Daniel Syme, "Reform Judaism and Day Schools: The Great Historical Dilemma," *Religious Education* 78 (Spring 1983): 173.

[248] Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis,* 220, 223; Syme, "Reform Judaism and Day Schools," 174. See also Nathan Glazer, "The Jew Left and the Jews," in *The Jewish Community in America,* ed. Marshall Sklare (New York: Behrman House, Inc: 1974), 310-311.

[249] Syme, "Reform Judaism and Day Schools," 173-174.

[250] In turning away from the universalism of the civil rights era to focus on Zionism, ethnicity, and Jewish particularism, American Jews worked to strengthen the security of and support for Israel and to alleviate the plight of Jews in the Soviet Union. Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis,* 223.

in the public schools, which reflected the breakdown of the conformist culture of the 1950s and the rise of what would become known as identity politics in the 1960s and 1970s. This "new education," which was endorsed by the American Association of Jewish Education in 1967, "affirm[ed] that Jewish education could be improved through social studies, relativism...mini-courses, open classrooms, individualized learning, role-playing and experiential learning."[251] It was precisely this approach that the founders of the Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis (HAI) employed in their attempt to effectively transmit traditional Judaism in the community's only intensive Jewish all-day private school, which opened its doors in the fall of 1971.

Although the day school borrowed some popular pedagogical techniques from the public schools, the very decline of the public school system during the 1960s and 1970s – described by some as "the collapse of public education" – was a major "push" factor contributing to the growth of the day school movement on the national level.[252] Many parents were disenchanted with the infiltration of the drug culture into the schools, and some Jewish parents, like other white parents concerned about the racial turmoil within the public schools, removed their children to avoid busing designed to achieve racial integration.[253]

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[251] Julius Weinberg, "The 'Greening' of Jewish Education," 184-186; Michael Zeldin, "Jewish Schools and American Society," *Religious Education* 78 (Spring 1983): 188.

[252] Jack Wertheimer, ed. *The American Synagogue: A Sanctuary Transformed* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 66; Schiff, "From Sunday School to Day School," 11; Chazan, "Education in the Synagogue: The Transformation of the Supplementary School," 180.

[253] Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 225. The role of race in the day school debate produced a few "distasteful accusations." Torah Umesorah historian Doniel Zvi Kramer described how the American Jewish Congress, in its testimony to the New Jersey Senate Committee on Education in 1967 opposing state support for day schools, "inveighed that Jews attended the day schools 'not because they love God but because they [were] afraid of the Negro.'" Kramer, *The Day Schools and Torah Umesorah*, 20.

The tension between public and private schooling was one of the most contentious aspects of the burgeoning day school movement within the Jewish community. While proponents of the day school noted the deterioration of public schools, opponents argued that voluntary self-segregation into a private Jewish school was a regressive step back to the world of the ghetto, which previous generations had worked so hard to abandon.[254] The steadfast commitment to public education was sacrosanct among Jews, who could hardly consider rejecting the privilege of attending the public schools like all other Americans.[255] The overwhelming majority of American Jews could not fathom betraying the public schools, which they revered for providing the education that opened the doors of economic advancement and societal acceptance for three and four generations of Jewish Americans.[256] Day school detractors held fast to their conviction that public schools were the democratic meeting ground for all ethnic groups to learn how to live together, thereby reducing prejudice and misunderstanding, and ultimately contributing to a safer, more hospitable society in which Jews could live.[257] Such a society respectful of Jews could certainly not be engendered if Jews themselves were not active participants in the public school system. Once again, at the core was the debate about what criteria contribute to shaping the ideal American Jewish identity; for day school opponents, support of the public schools was central to that definition. Some went further and argued that Jewish children raised outside the mainstream of American culture that

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[254] Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 225; Syme, "Reform Judaism and Day Schools," 168.

[255] Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis,* 226; Kramer, *The Day Schools and Torah Umesorah*, 17.

[256] Ephraim Frankel, "The School in the Intermediate Size Community," *Jewish Education* 51 (Spring 1983): 13; Syme, "Reform Judaism and Day Schools," 153.

[257] Janowsky, "Jewish Education: Achievements, Problems and Needs," 143; Syme, "Reform Judaism and Day Schools," 168.

existed in public schools would actually face obstacles in adjusting to American society.[258]

This last argument was the weakest. With Jews having gained access to the professions and wider society, the community acknowledged that it really no longer needed what public schools provided in terms of Americanization.[259] By mid-century, the possibility of adapting to America was confirmed, and the challenge clearly became the transmission and retention of Jewish identity and consciousness.[260] With an increased confidence in the dual identity of being both American and Jewish, sending a child to a private Jewish school was no longer seen as jeopardizing or sacrificing the "American" identity, but was rather increasingly endorsed as the means to create and save the "Jewish" identity.

THE HEBREW ACADEMY OF INDIANAPOLIS

With each generation of Jews in Indianapolis, the Jewish community continued to migrate farther northward, and by the early 1970s, nearly the entire Indianapolis Jewish community lived on the city's far north side, between the Broad Ripple neighborhood on the south and 96th Street on the north. As a result of the postwar baby-boom, membership in Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation (IHC) and Congregation Beth-El Zedeck (BEZ) swelled throughout the 1950s, and both congregations outgrew their synagogue buildings, particularly the religious school facilities. Within a four month span in 1958, both IHC and BEZ dedicated newly constructed synagogue buildings at

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[258] Uriah Zevi Engelman, "Community Responsibility for Jewish Education," in *A History of Jewish Education in America,* ed. Judah Pilch (New York: American Association for Jewish Education, 1969), 193.
[259] Schiff, "From Sunday School to Day School," 12.
[260] Chazan, "Education in the Synagogue: The Transformation of the Supplementary School," 180.

65th and Meridian Street and 65th and Spring Mill Road respectively.[261] In 1957, Central Hebrew Congregation and United Hebrew Congregation merged to form the largest Orthodox congregation in Indiana with 385 families; in the following year, they bought BEZ's building at 34th and Ruckle streets and renamed themselves Congregation B'nai Torah (Children of Torah). Only a few years later, traditionally observant Jews who were either members of B'nai Torah, Etz Chaim (the Sephardic congregation), or the newly formed United Orthodox Hebrew Congregation, recognized the need to follow their congregants north and relocate among the other synagogues and Jewish communal institutions. In 1963, Etz Chaim purchased a church on the corner of 64th Street and Hoover Road; in 1966 the United Hebrew Orthodox Congregation dedicated its newly constructed synagogue at 58th Street and Central Avenue; and in 1967 B'nai Torah moved into its newly constructed building at 65th Street and Hoover Road.[262]

All of the events unfolding on the international, national, and local scene created an environment finally ripe for the establishment of a Jewish day school in Indianapolis. But circumstances alone did not manifest the new institution; certain individuals in the community emerged as champions of traditional intensive Jewish education. When he

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[261] Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis,* 196-199; Rosenberg, *To 120 Years!,* 90-95. Lack of space and physical problems with the building at 10th and Delaware streets (which the congregation built in 1899) had been plaguing IHC since the mid-1920s, when they had their first discussion about moving to a new location; they discussed the matter again before and after World War II, and finally launched a fundraising campaign for new construction during their centennial year in 1956. IHC was the first religious institution built in Meridian Hills. Muriel Romer, "When the Menorah Lights are Shining on White River," typescript speech, no date, IHC Archives.

[262] Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis,* 199, 243; Fruchter, *Congregation B'nai Torah: The First 50 Years*, 16, 19, 23, 37, 50. The United Hebrew Orthodox Congregation (UOHC) resulted from the 1963 merger of the three remaining south side shuls: Sharah Tefilla, Knesses Israel, and Ezras Achim. Older members of the community maintained their membership in either UOHC or Etz Chaim as a way to nostalgically connect to the old south side community and to preserve a sense of ethnic or group identity; most members also affiliated with one of the larger congregations. Jewish communal institutions were actually the first to relocate to this neighborhood. The Jewish Federation acquired 38 acres of land near 69th Street between Spring Mill and Hoover roads in 1953. In 1958 the Jewish Community Center Association opened the doors to its new center, and in 1960 the JEA completed its new building, both located on the Federation campus. Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis,* 204, 206.

arrived in Indianapolis in 1970 at the age of twenty-six, newly hired B'nai Torah rabbi, Ronald Gray, was shocked to learn there was no day school. Rabbi Gray made establishing such a school his primary mission in Indianapolis. He immediately brought in a representative rabbi from Torah Umesorah in New York to speak to a specially invited group of parents in the Orthodox congregation about both the reasons to create a school and ways to do so.[263] It was apparently not the first time the congregation had broached the subject, and this conversation with Torah Umesorah seemed to be unfolding the same way others had: B'nai Torah congregants endorsed the idea of a Jewish day school and agreed that intensive Jewish education would stave off assimilation and intermarriage, which threatened the survival of American Jewry, but they insisted the funds were too sorely lacking to even consider making it a reality.[264]

Holocaust survivor and community newcomer Hart Hasten was frustrated by the negativity that permeated the meeting. He insisted that since everyone agreed that combining intensive Jewish and secular education in an all-day setting was the most promising way to create confident, knowledgeable, and practicing Jews, they could manage to raise the money necessary to support the school:

> This whole situation reminds me of the establishment of Israel. They didn't found the nation of Israel by waiting until they had all the money they needed before bringing in Jews to settle the land. The *idea* of a Jewish state, that was the important thing.[265]

Quoting Theodore Herzl's most popular assertion, Hasten declared: "If you will it, it is no dream." Applause erupted and Rabbi Gray insisted that Hasten assume chairmanship of a

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[263] Anita Heppner Plotinsky, "The Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis, 1971-1986," *Indiana Jewish History* 21 (August 1986): 23; Hart N. Hasten, *I Shall Not Die!* (New York: Gefen Books, 2003), 153-154. The Hebrew Academy Foundation (the endowment-arm of the HAI) hired Plotinsky to be the development director in 1985. Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the HAI, Inc., 31 January 1985, HHAI.

[264] Hasten, *I Shall Not Die!*, 154-155; Plotinsky, "The Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis," 24.

[265] Hasten, *I Shall Not Die!*, 155-156.

committee to explore establishing a day school in Indianapolis.[266] After touring the Miami Beach Hebrew Academy with the director of school organizations for Torah Umesorah, Hasten was convinced that such an institution should and could exist for Indianapolis' Jewish children:

> The sight of sweet children studying Torah and learning about our heritage could not help but melt my heart...I became awash in memories of the *heder* I attended as a child... The building was new and modern, and...I could almost taste the "yiddishkeit" (Jewish flavor) in the air.[267]

Within days of his return from Florida, the fundraising team of Hart Hasten and Rabbi Gray secured the necessary seed money of $13,000. Progress unfolded at an impressive pace. The initial meeting with Torah Umesorah had occurred on February 22, 1971, and on March 30, the Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis (HAI) was officially incorporated. At the first official meeting on May 5, a board of directors (mostly initial donors) was designated, which then approved by-laws and established working committees. Work began immediately with educating parents, recruiting students, planning fundraising events, and searching for faculty and teachers for both Jewish and secular subjects. Later that month, B'nai Torah granted permission for the Academy to use the congregation's religious school wing for the day school. HAI paid $1 to the congregation in order to show that the "two entities are separate and distinct...[and] that it is not a congregational school, but rather a day school for the entire Jewish community at large." In July, Cantor Edwin Epstein was hired to be the Academy's first principal.[268]

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[266] Hasten, *I Shall Not Die!*, 156; Plotinsky, "The Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis," 24.

[267] Hasten, *I Shall Not Die!*, 157.

[268] Minutes of the Meeting of Subscribing Members of the HAI, Inc., 30 March 1971, HHAI; Special Meeting of the HAI, Inc., 5 May 1971, HHAI; Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Officers of the Steering Committee of the HAI, Inc., 18 May 1971, HHAI; Joint Special Meeting of the Board of Directors and Officers of the Steering Cmte of the HAI, Inc., 5 May 1971, HHAI; Hasten, *I Shall Not Die!*, 159-161, 179; Plotinsky, "The Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis," 24-25. Except for a few years when brother Mark served as president in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and when son Bernard served as

When the Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis opened its doors on September 7, 1971, to seventeen children in kindergarten through grade three, it became the first major Jewish institution established outside the bounds of the Jewish Federation since the founding of the United Hebrew Schools in 1911, notably also an organization created by the Orthodox community. The founding of the Academy brought Indianapolis in line with other Jewish communities that had been running day schools for decades; in fact, Indianapolis was the last community in the country with over 7,500 Jews to institute a day school.[269]

The constitution and by-laws of the Hebrew Academy established *halacha* (Jewish law) as the governing authority concerning religious issues, which meant that students and faculty were expected to observe Jewish law and customs while in school. Therefore, the first half hour of the school day was devoted to morning prayers, with boys wearing traditional *tziztit* (fringed garments). Appropriate prayers and blessings were recited throughout the day, for example before and after the daily kosher lunch. Boys always wore head coverings and the school's kitchen was strictly kosher. On Fridays there was special preparation for Shabbat, the collection of charity (*tzedakah*), and a discussion of the week's Torah portion. Naturally, the school was closed for all

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president in the late 1990s, Hart Hasten was board president every year. B'nai Torah's cantor for fourteen years suddenly passed away in 1971. Edwin Epstein, a trained cantor, was able to assume the dual role of congregational cantor for B'nai Torah and principal for the Hebrew Academy. Epstein was educated at a Hebrew day school in Cleveland, attended Telshe Yeshiva College, and had served at Vancouver Hebrew Day School as well as the education director in two congregations on the West Coast. *The Torch* (August 1972): 6.

[269] Edwin Epstein, "The First Two Years: Director's Report 1971-1973" (typescript, 1973), 3, HHAI; Hasten, *I Shall Not Die!*, 153; Plotinsky, "The Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis," 23; Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 227.

Jewish holidays, while mirroring the calendar of the public Metropolitan School District of Washington Township for all other breaks and vacations.[270]

The issue of admission requirements surfaced many times during the school's early years. *Halacha* states that only children born of Jewish mothers are Jewish. Women choosing to become Jewish must undergo a highly intensive Orthodox conversion process to be Jewish in the eyes of Orthodox rabbinical authority. Orthodox rabbis, therefore, would not accept conversions performed by Reform or Conservative rabbis. But recognizing their desire to attract children "from Jewish homes of all varieties and intensities from converts to Judaism to ultra-orthodox practitioners," the Hebrew Academy board decided that any Indianapolis rabbi could vouch for a person's being Jewish, and that would suffice for admission.[271] Still, the application for enrollment asked if the child's parents were "born Jewish," and if not, "to explain."[272]

For all these religious trappings, however, the Hebrew Academy was considered a "modern Orthodox" school because it allowed boys and girls to study together. This practice, too, was adopted in order to attract children from Conservative and Reform families.[273] In fact, the school was never intended to be a school for the Orthodox alone, as part of its mission was to create observant Jews out of non-observant ones. During the Academy's first decade, the denominational affiliation of students broke down as follows: between 33 and 43 percent were from B'nai Torah and Etz Chaim (Orthodox),

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[270] Hart Hasten to New Members of the Board, 26 October 1972, HHAI; Hasten, *I Shall Not Die!*, 165; Plotinsky, "The Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis," 26.

[271] Epstein, "The First Two Years," 4.

[272] Special Meeting of the Board of Directors of the HAI, Inc., 25 May 1972, HHAI; *The Academy News* (April 1979): 3, HHAI; Hart Hasten to New Members of the Board, 26 October 1972, HHAI; Hasten, *I Shall Not Die!*, 165; Plotinsky, "The Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis," 28.

[273] Janowsky, "Jewish Education," 142; Plotinsky, "The Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis," 26-27. While boys and girls studying together was the case in the overwhelming majority of day schools, there were separate programs of study in the ultra-religious *yeshivot* and *mesivtot* in large urban areas, mostly New York. Kramer, *The Day Schools and Torah Umesorah*, xiii-xiv.

between 16 and 34 percent were from Beth-El Zedeck (Conservative), between 6 and 24 percent were from the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation (Reform), and between 15 and 20 percent were affiliated with no synagogue. "Clearly, the Academy was appealing to parents who had not chosen Orthodoxy for themselves, but wanted a traditional Jewish education for their children."[274] Additionally, the school's leaders took every opportunity to boast that at one time, children of every congregational rabbi in the community were enrolled, and faculty members represented the denominational spectrum.[275]

Understandably, navigating the religious mix and satisfying all parties involved proved to be a delicate balance. If the Academy was too Orthodox, the program might alienate children of Reform, Conservative, and unaffiliated parents; but if it failed to closely adhere to *halacha,* "it risked losing not only its Orthodox students but its *raison d'etre* as well."[276] The school's solution was not to teach Orthodoxy to the students, but for the faculty to lead by example in the observance of *kashrut* (dietary laws) and holiday traditions; during the 1972-1973 school year, every fourth grade student spent an entire Shabbat weekend with their Jewish studies teacher, sleeping, eating, and attending synagogue services.[277] This model of observance would then be reinforced throughout the Jewish curriculum, which accounted for 40 percent of the school day, and included a strong emphasis on both conversational and biblical Hebrew, as well as the Bible, laws and biblical commentary, holidays, customs, prayers and social values, Jewish literature

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[274] Plotinsky, "The Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis," 27.
[275] *The Academy News* (November 1976): 1, (April 1979): 3, HHAI; Hasten, *I Shall Not Die!*, 168; Plotinsky, "The Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis," 27; Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 227.
[276] Plotinsky, "The Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis," 27.
[277] Epstein, "The First Two Years," 26.

and history, and modern Israel. It is interesting to note that the list of subjects under religious curriculum also included "loyalty to the United States."[278]

The secular philosophy of the Academy emphasized an individualized approach for each student through open classrooms, small class sizes, a low student-teacher ratio, and non-graded materials, all of which were implemented in an effort to enable students to progress individually at their own pace.[279] In the early years, each student had two teachers, one for secular studies and the other for Jewish studies. The Jewish and secular curriculum would be integrated as much as possible, such as applying a geometry lesson to the design and building of a *sukkah* during the holiday of *Sukkot,* fulfilling the geography requirements by studying Israel and the Middle East, or combining history, writing, art, and multi-media skills to create a film on the history of Israel, complete with a script, stage, props, and camera use.[280]

The Academy's board and director recognized early that if the general studies program was lacking, it would be impossible to attract a critical mass of children, particularly those from less observant or even secular Jewish families. Director Epstein therefore made it a priority to establish a positive working relationship with the district's school superintendent, as well as other administrators in the public school system, by inviting them into the school to observe and offer advice. HAI successfully met all state and local requirements necessary for operation by December 1971, and was fully accredited by the State of Indiana in July 1972. The Academy's newsletter, first called

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[278] *The Academy News* (April 1976): 4, HHAI; Plotinsky, "The Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis," 26, 27-28.

[279] *The Torch* (August 1972): 3; Plotinsky, "The Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis," 26; Hasten, *I Shall Not Die!*, 165.

[280] Epstein, "The First Two Years," 15. The *sukkah* is the main feature of the fall festival of *Sukkot*; it is a booth-like structure erected in each person's yard with at least three sides and open on the top so stars are visible at night.

The Torch and later titled *The Academy News*, regularly emphasized that its general studies curriculum covered all materials addressed in the Washington Township Schools and was at least equal, if not superior, to the public school program.[281]

HAI's enrollment increased notably each year. The first year (1971-1972) began with seventeen children and ended with twenty-two in four grades (K-3); the next year, enrollment jumped to fifty-six students, and then to seventy-nine in 1975. Each subsequent year a grade was added so that the first graduating class of sixth graders was in 1975, at which time the Academy astutely created a *Midrasha* course for graduates and high school students to continue their studies in the afternoons after public school and on weekends.[282] In six to ten hours of instruction per week, *Midrasha* students continued to strengthen their Hebrew skills while delving into an in-depth study of codes of law through Talmudic and rabbinic texts, and exploring ethical problems and the philosophy of religion. The success of the *Midrasha* program, along with the clamoring of parents of younger students, convinced HAI to add seventh grade in 1978 and then eighth grade in the subsequent year. In 1979, the Academy established a morning track option and an agreement with the Washington Township Schools to allow Jewish high school students to enter school an hour late or leave an hour early in order to attend *Midrasha*. In that

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[281] Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Members of the HAI, Inc., 8 December 1971, HHAI; *The Torch* (December 1971): 7; Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Members of the HAI, Inc., 27 July 1972, HHAI; Epstein, "The First Two Years," 22; *The Academy News* (September 1978): 2, HHAI. It is notable that in the first issue of *The Torch*, IHC Rabbi Murray Saltzman was featured as the guest columnist. Touching on nothing controversial in his article, Saltzman described generally accepted "dimensions" of Jewish education. *The Torch* (December 1971): 3.

[282] Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Members of the HAI, Inc., July 27, 1972, HHAI; *The Academy News* (November 1976): 1, (September 1977): 1, (September 1978): 2, HHAI; Plotinsky, "The Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis," 25, 28; Hasten, *I Shall Not Die!*, 168; Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis,* 227.

year, HAI enrolled a total of 155 students from preschool through *Midrasha*; upper grade class sizes averaged fourteen students.[283]

The Academy created a preschool division for three- and four-year-olds in 1976 and then accepted children as young as two-and-a-half starting in 1977. The kindergarten and preschool classes were consistently filled to their limit, as Academy faculty warned parents that the later their children started, the more difficult it would be to bring Hebrew skills up to speed with other students. Additionally, from the first grade on, admission requirements included test scores and recommendations, as well as a battery of psychological tests to ensure the student could withstand an extended school day and dual track program.[284]

Increasing enrollment meant a perennial need for more physical space. Already by the second year of operation, HAI was outgrowing the facilities at B'nai Torah. In addition to the space limitation, the board recognized the school would probably attract more children if it were not housed in the Orthodox synagogue. Because of its location, there existed a perception on the part of some that the school was only for Orthodox children. And some parents who understood that it was intended to be a community school were still reluctant to enroll their child in a school housed in an Orthodox synagogue. The board decided to hold its future meetings at the Jewish Community Center in order to reinforce the image as a community school, and reached out to other synagogues and community institutions for a potential home.[285] In his memoir, Hart

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[283] *The Academy News* (April 1976): 4, (November 1976): 7, (September 1977): 1, (September 1978): 2, (Winter 1979): 6, HHAI.

[284] *Indiana Jewish Post and Opinion*, 21 May 1976; *The Academy News* (July 1976): 1, (September 1977): 1, (September 1978): 3, HHAI; "Fact Sheet," typescript, no date (ca.1979), HHAI; Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Board of Directors of the HAI, Inc., 25 May 1972, HHAI.

[285] Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the HAI, Inc., 26 October 1972, HHAI.

Hasten described the rebuffs from Rabbi Steinman at BEZ and Rabbi Saltzman at IHC, both of whom apparently cited concerns over competition with their own congregational religious programs.[286] Yet Hasten failed to acknowledge that even if they wanted to host the Academy, neither one of these institutions would have been "kosher enough" in the eyes of the Orthodox leadership to house the school, particularly with respect to preparing and serving kosher food for the students. Hasten also approached the Federation for use of the Jewish Educational Association (JEA) building during the day. The reasons cited by the Federation in its denial of this request were part of a much larger discussion about the relationship between the Academy and the Federation.

In 1976, Hart Hasten and his brother Mark bought five acres of land just north of B'nai Torah, and then donated it to HAI. Plans to construct a new building were underway immediately. Major gifts from a few individuals surpassed $350,000. The 1977 fundraising pamphlet enabled donors to check off various parts of the new school to underwrite: individual classrooms, arts and crafts room, science lab, preschool room, library, chapel, kitchen, auditorium/gym, lobby, office, lounge, boutique, playground equipment, audio/visual room, landscaping, floors, and furnishings. The new 26,000-square-foot building at 6602 Hoover Road was completed for the 1977-1978 school year.[287] Already pressed for more space by 1981, the preschool moved back into B'nai Torah and the middle school moved into adjacent rented trailers. In 1985, when the chapel was forced to be converted into a classroom and enrollment neared 200 students, another building campaign commenced. Completed in time for the 1987-1988 school

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[286] Hasten, *I Shall Not Die!*, 165, 167.

[287] *The Academy News* (April 1976): 1, 3, HHAI; *Indianapolis Star*, 5 June 1976; The Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis: 1977 Building Fund Drive (pamphlet), HHAI; The Academy News (September 1978): 1, HHAI; Hasten, I Shall Not Die!, 168, 169.

year, the addition doubled the school's size, adding twenty-five classrooms, as well as a library, computer lab, and museum.[288]

The academic success of Hebrew Academy students over the years has been impressive, even when taking into account that the student body is a self-selected group. They have consistently scored above the 90th percentile on achievement tests, compared to a national average of 50 percent, as well as placing one and two grades ahead of their current level.[289] From the outset, the Hebrew Academy faculty encouraged students to participate in community-wide art and science fairs, at which they regularly earned a disproportionate share of awards.[290] Providing students exposure to events both within the Jewish community and the community-at-large was clearly a priority of HAI. In the first two years, students enjoyed over fifty field trips. They made regular appearances at the Hooverwood nursing home and the JCC's Golden Age Club, they came out in impressive numbers for community rallies in support of Israel and to free Soviet Jews, and they visited every synagogue in the city on a *sukkah* tour.[291] Involvement in Jewish communal events not only improved relations between the Academy and communal

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[288] Minutes of the Executive Committee of the HAI, Inc., 14 May 1981, HHAI; *1985 Building Fund Drive* (pamphlet), HHAI; Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the HAI, Inc., 29 August 1985, HHAI; Plotinsky, "The Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis," 23, 28-29. In 1996, the school honored the life-long support of the Hastens by renaming the school the Hasten Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis. In 1999, with a matching grant from the Lilly Endowment, the Academy completed its latest building renovation, which added a technology center, expanded science facilities, and built new classrooms. *Souvenir Tribute Journal of the 33rd Annual HAI-Life Awards Dinner*, 23 May 2004, HHAI.

[289] *The Torch* (December 1971): 2, HHAI; Plotinsky, "The Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis," 30.

[290] Epstein, "The First Two Years," 15, 16; Plotinsky, "The Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis," 30.

[291] Field trips included visits to the following: the Children's Museum, Conner Prairie, Indiana State Museum, and Indianapolis Museum of Art, the Indianapolis Symphony, the Planetarium at Butler University, Holliday Park, Broad Ripple Park, and Eagle Creek Park, Downtown and Nora libraries, fire and police stations, train and bus stations and the airport, Indianapolis Zoo, Methodist Hospital, and the Nora Pet Shop. Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the HAI, Inc., 26 September 1972, HHAI; Epstein, "The First Two Years," 19-20.

institutions, but also impressed upon the students some core Jewish values, like caring for the elderly, social service, and contributing to the community.[292]

The emphasis on Jewish values and moral training was central to day school programs across the country. In their quest to positively differentiate day schools from public schools, proponents encouraged day school administrators and staff to proudly draw attention to the fact that, unlike the "value-free" education of public systems, intensive Jewish schooling was committed to a particular set of values rooted in Jewish text and tradition. Some day school advocates went further, asserting that the choice for parents was not actually between Jewish values and no values, because "value-free" education was actually an impossibility; meaning, public school students were inculcated with something worse than no values, that being those accepted as normative in society-at-large.[293]

The Hebrew Academy's Relationship with The Jewish Welfare Federation

Perennial challenges for the Hebrew Academy, like day schools across the country, were securing qualified teachers for Hebrew and Jewish studies, and the necessary funds to pay staff well and grow the program as needed. The turnover of Hebrew teachers was rampant because most were Israelis teaching in America on an exchange program that rotated every two to three years.[294] While HAI managed the

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[292] Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Members of the HAI, Inc., 8 December 1971, HHAI; Epstein, "The First Two Years," 4, 7, 19-20.

[293] Kramer, *The Day Schools and Torah Umesorah*, 19; Judah Pilch and Meir Ben-Horin, eds., *Judaism and the Jewish School: Selected Essays on the Direction and Purpose of Jewish Education* (New York: Bloch Publishing, Co., 1966), 209-210.

[294] Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Officers of the Steering Committee of the HAI, Inc., 18 May 1971, 30 June 1971, HHAI; Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Members of the HAI, Inc., 27 July 1972, HHAI; Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the HAI, Inc., 31 August 1972, HHAI; *The Academy News* (September 1978): 2, HHAI; Plotinsky, "The Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis," 29.

teacher situation behind the scenes without much community fanfare, the Academy's fiscal status was regularly front page news because of the heated debate about whether financial support should come from the Jewish Welfare Federation.

Simply stated, the issue of Federation support for the Academy was arguably the most contentious and divisive issue the Indianapolis Jewish community had ever faced. At its core, the debate hinged on the most familiar theme of the American Jewish experience: where to strike the balance between preserving Judaism and embracing America and how to define and then secure an authentic Jewish identity. Day school supporters generally saw opponents as willing "assimilationists," while opponents saw day school supporters as "too Jewish" and segregationist.[295] Even with the eventual recognition on the part of day school detractors that there was indeed a place for intensive Jewish education, there was still the issue of communal dollars supporting the denominational enterprise of an Orthodox-sponsored school.

Funding for the school was a primary concern of its founders from the outset; generous donors and creative fundraising events could only go so far. During the summer of 1971, only months before opening its doors, the first of many meetings between Academy and Federation leaders took place; and the first of many denials for Academy funding resulted. In Hart Hasten's recounting of this first meeting between himself and Federation president, Martin Larner, the exchange unfolded unpleasantly, with Larner asserting that there already existed quality Jewish education through the JEA and that public education should be supported because it allowed for the "equal advancement for all regardless of religion or race." In his attempt to soften the blow of rejection, Larner continued by saying that just like many Jews became Zionists after the

[295] Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 228.

State of Israel was born, maybe there was future hope for significant day school support, if opinion among the majority of Jews were to change as well. Needless to say, this incensed Hasten, who was an ardent (even militant) Zionist since the days of his youth in post-World War II Eastern Europe. Hasten lashed back:

> You were wrong about Israel in 1948 and you're wrong about our day school today. The only difference is that we're not going to wait twenty-five years for you to figure out how wrong you are. We are going to establish this school with Federation support or without it because we are totally committed to the need for it.[296]

For day school supporters, the tone of this altercation exemplified the acrimonious relationship between the Academy and Federation. Academy leaders looked elsewhere for the funds so desperately needed. A 1972 presentation to the Lilly Endowment, which emphasized the Academy's bilingual track and highly individualized teaching approach, resulted in an $80,000 grant disbursed over three years. Hasten, who never missed an opportunity to make his case for the Academy, quickly pointed to the irony of the situation: funds coming from outside the Jewish community to support an institution whose goal was to perpetuate Judaism. The Academy newsletter expressed the hope that financial support would eventually come from the Jewish community as well.[297]

Shifting the focus of the request away from a financial allocation, and recognizing their need for more physical space, the Academy proposed to the Federation to share the JEA's building, arguing that doing so would be an economical use of funds, space, supplies, and some staff. In the fall of 1972, the Federation established a committee to study the relationship between the HAI and JEA, and requested detailed proposals and

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[296] Hasten, *I Shall Not Die!,* 163.
[297] *The Torch* (August 1972): 1, HHAI; Hasten, *I Shall Not Die!,* 174.

recommendations, as well as a ten-year projection from both institutions.[298] Replete in Academy board meeting minutes are calls to make sure that in every conversation with and presentation to the Federation, the "community aspect" of the school should be emphasized in that "all persuasions in the community are being served." This call was invariably followed by a strong caveat that an official relationship with the Federation should under no circumstances result in any loss of control by the board, or decision-making authority with respect to the hiring of faculty or the school's philosophy.[299] While recognizing that day schools needed funds, Torah Umesorah warned of the pressure that would be exerted by Federations, which were "headed by nonobservant individuals who did not agree with the traditional ideology of most day schools," and who would want to implement a broad-based curriculum.[300]

Although the JEA and HAI managed to share some teaching materials and even co-sponsored a few programs, JEA leaders were highly skeptical of a more concrete relationship with HAI.[301] In 1972, JEA president William Weinstein questioned whether the Academy would accept the employment "of an individual who is not *shomer shabbat*...who is not *kosher*...who belongs to a Reform synagogue...[or] who is not a synagogue attender at all." A significant issue was the Academy's insistence that "uncompromisingly kosher facilities" be maintained in the JEA. Each side viewed the other as unnecessarily stubborn in their unwillingness to compromise.

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[298] Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the HAI, Inc., 31 August 1972, 26 October 1972, HHAI.

[299] Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the HAI, Inc., 31 August 1972, 26 October 1972, 19 December 1972, HHAI; Hart Hasten to Phil Pecar, Chair of the Federation Sub-Committee Studying HAI, no date, HHAI; *Indiana Jewish Post and Opinion,* 19 July 1974.

[300] Kramer, *The Day Schools and Torah Umesorah*, 135, 136.

[301] Epstein, "The First Two Years," 8.

In April 1974, the next JEA president, M. E. Hodes, openly discouraged Federation support of the Academy, arguing that the Federation was "non-denominational" and thus should not support an Orthodox-sponsored institution.[302] During the summer of that year, the Federation board finally addressed the two-year-old request from HAI and voted 14-7 against allocating funds. It then appointed a committee to study the question of Jewish education in Indianapolis. Hart Hasten argued that the Federation's exclusion of "a major enterprise of the Jewish community from coordination by the Federation creat[ed] the type of division within the community which [the] Federation was founded to eliminate."[303]

In 1976, Academy leaders approached the Federation again for an allocation to support its operating budget. They emphasized that one-third of their eighty students came from families unaffiliated with any synagogue and argued that HAI was clearly fulfilling a need within the community by providing a Jewish education to children who would otherwise not receive it.[304] Just as the Academy broke ground to build their own school (since attempts at sharing space with the JEA were unsuccessful), the Federation voted 22-5 in favor of *not* changing its policy toward allocating operating funds to the Academy. Resentful and angry rhetoric from HAI supporters surfaced in the *Academy News* and the *Indiana Jewish Post and Opinion:*

> They feel that the afternoon school is providing enough education for everyone in the community. They think that all we need to know is a little Hebrew. This is Judaism according to them...[305]

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[302] Plotinsky, "The Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis," 32.
[303] *Indiana Jewish Post and Opinion*, 9 August 1974.
[304] *The Academy News* (April 1976): 3, HHAI; *Indiana Jewish Post and Opinion*, 5 March 1976.
[305] Hart Hasten, quoted in article of the *Indiana Jewish Post and Opinion*, 14 May 1976. It is worthwhile to note that the editors of this newspaper were members at the Orthodox congregation, B'nai Torah.

> The Academy is accused of being an "Orthodox" institution. Perhaps it might be...I cannot understand why "Orthodoxy" is so detestable. The Academy is asked to compromise...This I cannot accept....the Jewish Welfare Fund has no liberty to dictate the program of the Academy.[306]
>
> It is hard to understand why a community which boasts top caliber recreational facilities and social services for young and old can knowingly opt for a highly limited educational system [the JEA].[307]
>
> ...A tragic denial of our existence, let alone [our] contribution, seems to pervade totally the mentality of our Jewish leadership...We can be found entertaining several times a year at Hooverwood and the JCC's Golden Age luncheons. We have involved ourselves in charity drives...However, when priority is given to Cambodia at leadership meetings...one can only conclude...that the Torah has not applied for membership acceptance by our community leadership, although application has been on file for some time...[308]
>
> Just as Indianapolis was the last city of its size to establish a day school, we now have the dubious distinction of probably being the only US city of its size whose Federation gives no financial aid to its day school.[309]

Incensed and apparently energized by the series of rejections, Academy leaders drove this last point home when they approached the Federation yet again in the spring of 1978; this time they requested a specific dollar amount of $60,000.[310] They publicized materials detailing the level of day school support afforded by other federations, drew attention to pronouncements of day school support from national organizations, and cited studies and articles that claimed the intensive day school setting was the most effective way to combat assimilation and ensure Jewish survival. A 1971 Resolution of the Council of Jewish Federations encouraged local federations to aid day schools and to recognize "the right of every Jew to receive a Jewish education." A 1977 report issued by the Council of Jewish Federations showed a city-by-city breakdown of the percentage

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[306] Letter to the Editor submitted by David Lee Blatt to the *Indiana Jewish Post and Opinion*, 26 June 1976.
[307] Hart Hasten's column in *The Academy News* (July 1976): 3, HHAI.
[308] Edwin Epstein's column in *The Academy News* (July 1976): 7, HHAI.
[309] *The Academy News* (July 1976): 3, HHAI.
[310] *Indiana Jewish Post and Opinion*, 31 March 1978.

of communal dollars directed to Jewish education. Out of thirty-six communities with a Jewish population between 5,000 and 14,000, Indianapolis was the only one listed as giving no dollars to its day school, while the average allocation to day schools from the Jewish education budget of all federations across the country was 44 percent.[311] Ohio State University professor Harold Himmelfarb asserted that:

> Of all the educational experiments, the most traditional approach – all day school education – has proven to be the most effective, [and since] Jewish schooling has no lasting impact unless a minimum amount is obtained,...[the] minimum requirement...should be 3,000 hours. In practical terms that means a child should attend Hebrew [afternoon] school approximately 8 hours a week for 9.5 years. Since it would be easier in many cases for the child to attend a day school, more day schools should be established.[312]

After months of conducting a "thorough survey of the Hebrew Academy," the Federation's executive committee denied the request for $60,000 late in 1978.[313] A motion for the entire board to consider the question of the grant was tabled to be heard at a special full board meeting called for April 1979. What ensued was three months of "strongly-worded opinions" – really, vitriolic attacks and counter-attacks – from advocates on both sides of the debate.[314] These "opinions" filled the pages of the *Indiana Jewish Post and Opinion*, and were condemned in sermons by Rabbi Jonathan Stein

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[311] *The Academy News* (no date, ca. March 1979): 1-4, HHAI. This edition was a special publication of the Academy's newsletter, printed on newspaper-sized glossy paper and distributed to all members of the Jewish community a couple weeks before the Federation board considered the motion for the $60,000 grant. The Council of Jewish Federations is the national umbrella organization over all federations in North America; today it is called United Jewish Communities (UJC). In a rebuttal letter sent to the Federation board, president Phil Pecar took particular issue with the comparison of federations' giving levels:

> The summary failed to show that Indianapolis is unique in having a JEA, and that many communities have no educational institution other than a day school and Sunday schools....Indianapolis ranked fifth out of forty communities in its size range in giving for Jewish education and second in the percentage of the total campaign which is devoted to Jewish education...

Letter dated 2 April 1979, printed in the *Indiana Jewish Post and Opinion*, 6 April 1979.

[312] *The Academy News* (no date, ca. March 1979): 2, HHAI.

[313] *Indiana Jewish Post and Opinion*, 5 January 1979.

[314] Plotinsky, "The Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis," 33.

(IHC) and Rabbi Dennis Sasso (BEZ) as abusive name-calling and vituperative slander.[315]

B'nai Torah Rabbi Ronald Gray delivered a "wrathful sermon [comparing] the seventeen who voted against the grant with the Greeks of the Hanukkah era [who banned Jews from worshipping]...and compared the Academy to the one cruse of 'pure' oil discovered when the defiled Temple was restored."[316] HAI board members accused Federation leaders of "bowing to the pressure of large donors" and insisted the rejection resulted from the stubborn unwillingness of the community's wealthiest (and least observant) Jews to relinquish communal power and a desire to stymie any competition for the JEA.[317] Speaking at Shabbat worship services at B'nai Torah, Hebrew Academy president Hart Hasten accused those voting against funding for HAI as being "a danger to *Yiddishkeit* in Indianapolis" and described them as "*am haratzim*, ignoramuses."[318]

Arguments put forward by Federation leaders in Indianapolis echoed many of the concerns described earlier in this chapter. A Letter to the Editor of the *Indiana Jewish Post and Opinion* derided the newspaper for its unbalanced reporting on the issue: "Despite the amount of material appearing in your pages, there has not been set forth the various points of view which...culminated in the decision not to provide financial support." The author of the letter, Reuben Shevitz, then summarized the arguments:

1) The Academy competes with the public school system, which is the desirable avenue for secular education in our pluralistic society.
2) The Academy represents "sectarian" religious education rather than a program which serves the needs of the entire community.
3) Such an appropriation of Jewish Welfare Federation monies diverts additional funds from critical overseas needs.

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[315] *Indiana Jewish Post and Opinion*, 23 March, 30 March 1979.
[316] Ibid., 5 January 1979, Box 129, Folder 4, JWF, IHS.
[317] Ibid., 16 February 1979.
[318] Ibid., 23 February 1979.

4) The Academy is used by some as an escape from the issues involved in integrating the public schools.
5) Supporters of the Academy have refused to accept existing policies regarding local agency support by the Federation.
6) It is not the purpose of the Federation to support secular education.
7) Limited enrollment in the Academy after four years of operation indicates very limited interest from the Jewish community at large.
8) Federation already supports a program of Jewish education through the JEA and should not become involved in duplicate programs of similar nature.[319]

In a nine-page letter disseminated community-wide, Federation president Phil Pecar expressed outrage at the inflammatory attacks issued by Academy leaders, and questioned whether "people who work diligently without compensation to keep the Indianapolis Jewish community viable deserve to be accused of being 'irrational,' 'irresponsible,' 'racist' or 'unAmerican.'" Outside of the philosophical debate on day school education in general, Pecar described a more concrete set of reasons why the executive committee denied the Academy grant. First, the Federation's long-standing policy was (and still is) that any agency funded through communal dollars agrees to some budgeting control and not to raise funds without Federation approval. According to Pecar, the Academy "refused" both requirements. Financially, the Federation simply could not afford the grant, not only because the 1978 dollars were already allocated, but also because a $50,000 pledge from the Hasten brothers was withheld because of the executive committee's vote. Moreover, allocating such dollars in 1979 would require significant budget cuts to current local agencies and limited donations to Israel and the Anti-Defamation League.

> ...would you close Hooverwood or the JCC...would you quit resisting anti-Semitism [or] cut down the number of Russian Jews which Indianapolis has committed to take...?

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[319] Letter to the Editor submitted by Reuben Shevitz to the *Indiana Jewish Post and Opinion*, 16 July 1976.

Finally, Pecar broke down enrollment and tuition numbers: only fifty-four of 114 students were full time (the rest were in nursery school, kindergarten, or the after-school *midrasha* program); and while the cost to educate each student was budgeted at over $3,200, tuition was set at only $1,000. With scholarships and reduced tuition for multiple children per family, parents paid an average of $650 per student.

> Some members of the executive committee do not feel that the community should support those children whose parents can well afford to pay for the education of their children. Is it financially responsible to peg the tuition in a private school below actual cost for those who can afford to pay their fair share and then request charitable dollars to make up the deficit?[320]

Add to the debate impassioned sermons delivered by the rabbis of the Reform and Conservative congregations (Jonathan Stein at IHC and Dennis Sasso at BEZ), both of whom agreed on many points at issue. They condemned the fact that discussion had deteriorated into hurtful "name-calling." They endorsed the need for and effectiveness of all-day intensive Jewish education to ensure Jewish continuity, and therefore approved of the Federation providing moral and financial support to the Academy. However, they both also called on the Academy to accept the fact that some level of communal oversight and involvement would justifiably and necessarily come with financial assistance. And while they both expressed their preference for a broader "religio-philosophical orientation" that would include the teaching of "comparative Judaism," they acknowledged the Academy's success in attracting students from across denominational lines, thereby affording it some degree of status as a "communal school" even though a "communal curriculum" was not presented.[321]

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[320] *Indiana Jewish Post and Opinion*, 16 February 1979.

[321] *Indiana Jewish Post and Opinion*, 23 March 1979 (Rabbi Dennis Sasso's sermon); *Indiana Jewish Post and Opinion*, 30 March 1979 (Rabbi Jonathan Stein's sermon).
Below are noteworthy, albeit lengthy, excerpts from their sermons:

Days before the April 1979 board meeting, Pecar disseminated two letters, one to the Federation's board of directors, and the other to a "scholarship committee" that would come into existence upon the defeat of the $60,000 grant motion. In both letters, Pecar reasserted how financially irresponsible it would be for the Federation to allocate dollars it did not have, as well as the seriousness of the threat that such a grant would have on long-standing policies regarding deficit funding and agency oversight. Yet he also recognized that a "no" vote followed by no positive action on the part of the board would have damaging ripple effects that were certain to widen the rift in the community. Pecar proposed providing scholarships to those students whose families could not afford HAI

Rabbi Sasso: "If the Academy is to receive substantial financial support from the federated community, as I hope it will, it must cooperate with JWF...while it has the right to present or advocate its particular approach to Judaism it must be fully conscious and aware of the needs of and respect the viability of the Jewish religious orientations among its students, as practiced in their homes and in their synagogues...The Academy must morally restrain its leaders and directors from making statements that are harmful to Jewish unity and ultimately to its own cause."

Rabbi Stein: "I am mighty tired of having members of my congregation, good and honest people and Jews, slandered for no good reason other than taking a stand on an issue they feel is made out of a commitment and on principle...There is no Jew in this town, on either side, who is interested in *not* perpetuating Judaism. The only question is how...Jewish life in America is in a very tenuous position right now. We have a rising rate of intermarriage, a slowing birth rate, a high rate of Jewish ignorance, we are threatened by missionizing groups and by cults...We carry with us the memories of the Holocaust and events in the Middle East do not portend well for a stable and enduring peace for the State of Israel...The attention of every American Jew must be focused on the survival of the Jewish people...The existence of a full time Jewish educational system in Indianapolis is a legitimate tool for the perpetuation and the survival of Judaism...If there is one valid objection to funding the Hebrew Academy, I believe it is on the basis of [the public school vs. private school] issue. I believe that one can, in all good conscience, oppose Federation funding because the Academy is a private school. Not because it's a Jewish school, but because it's a private school. The argument is that Jews "made it" in this country by availing themselves of the public education system, and that we owe that system something. I believe that. On the other hand, let us face the reality that the public school system in many parts of this country is a failure. It is not that people send their kids to the Hebrew Academy so that they don't have to go to school with black kids...[that] is simply not true...It's an escape from a deteriorating public education system...In spite of everything I have said in favor of funding the Academy, however, it would seem to me that the Federation has...a true and abiding responsibility to expect that there is some fiscal responsibility for all communally-raised and allocated funds...the Federation has the right to expect that the Hebrew Academy truly be a communal school...where the needs of all religious perspectives are met. And I also believe that no institution has a right to come in and ask the Federation to change long-standing policies for the sake of one request....the Hebrew Academy must be willing to legitimate Federation expectations in order to justify the reception of funds."

tuition as the way to enable the Federation to subvent a very specific need, while preserving the Federation's fiduciary guidelines.[322]

While it was not surprising that the board voted against the $60,000 "no-strings" grant, it was a shock that the motion to create a mechanism for scholarship funds was introduced by Mark Hasten, then president of the Hebrew Academy. And of course, both sides claimed credit for initiating the compromise idea.[323] Yet incredibly, the Academy board actually voted *not* to accept a $12,500 stipend for scholarships from the Federation, and insisted that the amount should be $25,000 and any "excess could be applied to other needs of the institution."[324] This demand was not met, and the board of the Hebrew Academy ultimately decided to accept the scholarship grant, the amount of which increased to $15,000 for each of the years from 1980 through 1984. In 1985 the allocation from the Federation for HAI scholarships jumped to $42,500, and then to over $54,000 in 1987.[325] The key to these major increases in Federation funding resulted from two factors: 1) the immigration of Jews from the Soviet Union and 2) a new generation of Federation leadership that was more amenable to day school support.[326]

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[322] The scholarship committee was comprised of individuals across denominational lines, including those in favor of financial support for HAI, while it had "no members who demonstrated an unwillingness to moderate their position." Phil Pecar to the Scholarship Committee, 30 March 1979; Phil Pecar to the Board of Directors and Governors of the Jewish Welfare Federation, 2 April 1979 in the *Indiana Jewish Post and Opinion*, 6 April 1979.

[323] *Indiana Jewish Post and Opinion*, 20 April 1979; *The Academy News* (April 1979): 5, HHAI.

[324] *Indiana Jewish Post and Opinion,* 4 May 1979. It is noteworthy that alongside the Academy article in this issue of the *Post*, is the announcement that the directors at both the JEA and HAI were resigning (Gideon Goren after four years at JEA, and Edwin Epstein after eight years at HAI). There is no indication in the article that specifically points to their enduring years of drama on the Indianapolis Jewish education scene, but it is interesting to ponder how much the intensity of events may have informed their decision to leave.

[325] Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the HAI, Inc., 19 December 1980, 25 March 1982, 17 February 1983, 25 October 1984, 25 April 1985, 22 January 1987, HHAI; *The Academy News* (December 1985): 2, HHAI; Plotinsky, "The Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis," 33-34.

[326] Hasten, *I Shall Not Die!,* 175-176.

THE MOST RECENT WAVE OF IMMIGRATION: JEWS FROM THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

Between 1974 and 1981, 177 Soviet Jews settled in Indianapolis, and those numbers continued to swell throughout the 1980s. Just as "established" Jews had done for previous waves of immigration throughout the last century, the Jewish Federation established a New Americans Committee to coordinate the resettlement effort among communal agencies to help the newest members of the community secure housing, employment, and education, and acculturate into the community. The Jewish Community Center provided social activities and established a Russian Club, the Jewish Family and Children's Services assisted with job re-training and placement, the National Council of Jewish Women created a "family circle" program that was replicated nationwide, and the Bureau of Jewish Education (BJE, formerly known as the JEA) spearheaded English and Judaic instruction.[327]

As with all waves of immigrants, education was a key component to resettlement. But unlike their Eastern European coreligionists who came to America at the turn of the twentieth century or after World War II, émigrés from the Soviet Union in the 1970s and 1980s had received very little, if any, Jewish education in Communist Russia. Most of them considered themselves Jewish by birth and members of a Jewish nationality, rather than identifying with the Jewish religion. With few exceptions, Soviet Jews had no tradition of synagogue attendance for at least forty years, and marked important Jewish holidays within their homes, if at all.[328] More than with any other previous group of immigrants to the United States, the established Jewish community's effort to educate

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[327] Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 248. The JEA changed its name to the Bureau of Jewish Education in 1980.

[328] Fran Markowitz, "Jewish in the USSR, Russian in the USA: Social Context and Ethnic Identity," in *Persistence and Flexibility: Anthropological Perspectives on the American Jewish Experience*, ed. Walter P. Zenner (Albany: State University of New York, 1988), 81, 85.

Jews from the Soviet Union required a preponderance of specifically *Jewish* education, in addition to English and American citizenship classes.

The Hebrew Academy was "proud to have the responsibility for the Jewish education [of Soviet Jewish immigrant children]...and pleased to be a part of the community involvement in the resettling program."[329] The first immigrant students enrolled at the Hebrew Academy in 1977.[330] By the end of the 1979-1980 school year, eight Russian students were in grades one through five; in 1981 and 1982 the Academy provided $11,500 and $12,000 in scholarships for twelve and sixteen Russian children respectively (this was in addition to similar levels of scholarship support for non-immigrant students).[331] The influx of immigrant students necessitated the hiring of two part-time professionals to provide the extra tutoring in English and Hebrew necessary to mainstream them into the regular classroom, a process which took an average of three months.[332] Throughout the 1980s, HAI leaders persisted in their appeal for operating funds from the Federation (requesting $100,000 in 1980), arguing that the scholarship dollars were grossly inadequate to offset the extra cost of educating the Russian immigrant children. The Federation did agree to fully fund the first year of tuition for immigrant students.[333]

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[329] *The Academy News* (December 1977): 1, HHAI.
[330] *The Academy News* (September 1977): 1, (December 1977): 1, HHAI.
[331] Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the HAI, Inc., 28 August 1980, 27 August 1981, HHAI; *The Academy News* (May 1980): 5, HHAI.
[332] Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the HAI, Inc., 25 March, 26 June 1980, HHAI; Minutes of Russian Immigrant Programming Meeting called by the Indianapolis Chapter of the National Council of Jewish Women, 30 January 1980, Box 227, Folder 6, JWF, IHS; *The Academy News* (April 1979): 3. Children of Iranian émigrés were also among the school's immigrant population.
[333] Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the HAI, Inc., 18 December 1980, HHAI.

By 1982, the Academy's budget topped $530,000 as their debt neared $100,000.[334] If the board decided to increase tuition rates too drastically, they ran the risk of losing some families no longer able to afford the cost; and neither creative fundraisers nor gifts from donors were enough to ensure the school's long term viability.[335] Through regular meetings with the Federation, the HAI board learned that a major barrier to more significant funding was, ironically, the size of the school's deficit. Federation leaders expressed concern about the risks of deficit funding and encouraged the Academy to do more to secure the school's long term financial foundation. In 1983, the board created the Hebrew Academy Foundation as an endowment to accept charitable donations from individuals, businesses, estates, and other philanthropic organizations. "The rules are that the school must remain independent or the foundation ceases to exist. The school must continue in the tradition of *Halacha* as stated in the bylaws and constitution."[336]

Remain independent or cease to exist? The Hebrew Academy apparently felt that no education was better than a non-traditional one. A number of events exemplify the fear Academy leaders had of somehow being forced or swindled into relinquishing any level of control over the school. In 1977, when HAI moved out of B'nai Torah into its newly constructed building, Rabbi Gray expressed his pride in seeing his primary mission, the establishment of a day school, become reality. But as the Academy's primary watchdog overseeing the implementation and integration of *halacha,* not only

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[334] Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the HAI, Inc., 15 December 1981, 20 January, 17 February 1983, HHAI; Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Members of the HAI, Inc., 17 June 1982, HHAI; Minutes of the Executive Committee of the HAI, Inc., 20 July 1982, HHAI.

[335] The HAI Auxiliary ran a gift shop and organizes raffles, bingo, and a consignment bazaar. In December 1981, the Weisz family made a $100,000 donation, still leaving the Academy over $88,000 in debt. In 1982, there was over $25,000 in outstanding collectible tuition from delinquent families. Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the HAI, Inc., 24 September, 15 December 1981, 20 July 1982, HHAI.

[336] Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the HAI, Inc., 26 October, 18 November 1982, HHAI; *The Academy News* (April 1983): 3, HHAI.

whenever necessary, but also whenever possible, Rabbi Gray was perennially drawn to issuing statements of warning:

> The Academy can learn a good lesson from its landlord because despite numerous moves from South to North, Congregation B'nai Torah has remained an Orthodox Synagogue in both theory and practice. We all hope, pray, expect and even insist that the Academy remain true to the philosophy and goals for which it was founded.[337]

In 1980, the JEA became the Bureau of Jewish Education (BJE), and not only changed its name, but also embraced what it considered its responsibility to broaden the communal approach to Jewish education in Indianapolis with respect to audience, scope, and creativity. HAI saw the name change as nothing more than a power grab and an attempt to impose itself as an umbrella agency *over* the Academy, rather than another organization alongside it.[338] When the BJE extended an invitation to HAI for a seat on its newly formed board of directors, Academy leaders refused, asserting that doing so would give the BJE legitimacy in the community it did not deserve. Although some HAI board members suggested that having a representative on the BJE board could be an effective way to voice the Academy's concerns and have someone on the "inside," Rabbi Gray, the Hasten brothers, and others were adamant that the self-appointed group was looking for control:

> It was agreed that the scheme by the JEA to appoint themselves a Bureau is a farce and is apparently an effort to become the umbrella organization of all Jewish education in the community, by fooling the community into believing they <u>are</u> the Bureau, when in fact, they do not exist.[339]

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[337] *The Shofar* 24 (April 1, 1977): 1, HHAI.
[338] Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the HAI, Inc., 28 February 1980, HHAI.
[339] Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the HAI, Inc., 12 May 1980, HHAI.

The HAI board sent the BJE a letter declining their request along with a detailed explanation for the refusal. Strikingly, Rabbi Gray's words could have come from the mouths of his and the Academy's opponents only a few years earlier about HAI:

> A Bureau that is to serve the community must first receive the mandate of the community... There will be additional costs as the JEA expands its programming... Community money will be used, yet the community has not been asked if it even wants this service... With added responsibilities...the primary function of the JEA – the afternoon Talmud Torah – has to suffer... I will not accept a Bureau which is imposed on me and on the community.[340]

Of course, ignoring the BJE did not make it disappear. In fact, a couple years later, the BJE board seriously explored the feasibility of establishing the "BJE Foundation School," a day school program, which – as described by BJE director Uri Korin – would be "Hebraic-Judaic education...gear[ed]...to a modern approach; ie, the Conservative-Reform way of life." Once again, while the HAI board decided to be cautious and appear as if ignoring the development, Rabbi Gray immediately mounted an aggressive campaign to thwart any initial progress.[341] The BJE's "Foundation School" never materialized.

By the mid-1980s, there seemed reason for optimism, as the new executive director of the Federation, Harry Nadler, was a personal supporter of day school education, with his two children enrolled and his wife among the teaching staff at the Hebrew Academy. With Nadler's appearance on the scene, communication between HAI and the Federation substantially improved in regularity and tone.[342] HAI board members were cautiously optimistic when they were included on a newly formed Federation "Day

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[340] *The Shofar* 26 (March 3, 1980): 1, HHAI.

[341] Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the HAI, Inc., 22 March 1983, HHAI; Plotinsky, "The Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis," 33-34.

[342] Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the HAI, Inc., 24 May 1984, HHAI; Hasten, *I Shall Not Die!*, 176; Plotinsky, "The Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis," 33-34.

School Committee," whose charge was to examine the possibility of affording the Academy "beneficiary agency" status.[343] The Federation seemed more receptive than ever before to the possibility of designating a regular allocation to the Hebrew Academy. HAI board members debated the appropriate balance of language to use in their official "Resolution for Federation Funding Request." The resolution requested annual funding

> in parity with the per capita levels of support granted to other local organizations providing Jewish educational services (i.e., the Bureau of Jewish Education)...limited to a sum not to exceed the Hebrew Academy's operating deficit... We agree [to] abide by the conditions associated with [beneficiary agency] status as set forth by the Jewish Welfare Federation charter and by-laws... We agree to encourage contributions to the Jewish Welfare Federation's annual campaign... We agree to supply all budgetary and financial documents as called upon...[344]

As expected, Rabbi Gray's contribution was a heavy reminder of the danger involved:

> We must make it crystal clear that we will not entertain any implied or expressed interference in curriculum, philosophy, staff, etc. We must be careful not to get ourselves in a position which would make it appear that we were turning their offer down. This could be a Pandora's Box.[345]

Although the Federation decided not to award "beneficiary agency" status to the Hebrew Academy, it did increase the scholarship grant significantly from $15,000 to $42,500 in 1985, and continued to increase the allocation every year thereafter to completely cover the cost of scholarships granted by the Academy to families unable to afford the tuition.[346] Although the presence of Russian students during the 1980s helped

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[343] A beneficiary agency was any organization other than a constituent agency (JCC, BJE, Hooverwood, JCRC, JFCS), that was regional, national, or international in scope to which the Federation allocated funds. HAI would be "breaking new ground" if approved as a local agency with this status. Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the HAI, Inc., 31 January, 1985, HHAI.

[344] "RESOLUTION: Federation Funding Request," submitted to the Board of Directors of the Jewish Welfare Fund by the Board of Directors of the Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis, 31 January 1985, attached to Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the HAI, Inc., 31 January, 1985, HHAI.

[345] Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the HAI, Inc., 31 January, 1985, HHAI.

[346] Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the HAI, Inc., 25 April, 30 May 1985, 22 January 1987, HHAI; *The Academy News* (December 1985): 1, HHAI.

swell Academy enrollment to 200 in 1986 and over 300 by 1990, Hart Hasten candidly, almost proudly, admitted that the "Russian scholarships" line was a "pointless charade" because once the funds "were received by the school, they were fungible and could be used to defray any of its general operating costs."[347]

Were Hebrew Academy leaders justified in the intensity of their protection and ownership of the school's philosophy and curriculum? When one reflects on the path of the Orthodox-created United Hebrew Schools after it accepted Federation sponsorship (becoming the JEA and then BJE), the answer might very well be yes. Yet every increase in the scholarship allocation to the Academy seemed to be met with more frustration and fear than with appreciation, as if the desire for increased Federation dollars would lead to a decreased control of every nuance of the school. After years of an exhaustingly difficult relationship, which had degenerated to levels detrimental to both the Academy's cause and the Federation's communal role, things seemed to be improving in the mid-1980s; yet with the announcement by the Federation that it would nearly triple its allocation in 1985, HAI leaders were still on the attack:

> Our Board insists on an appropriate level of allocation from the Federation, not just $50,000 to keep us quiet and be able to appease the Board or fool the general community into believing that the Hebrew Academy was receiving adequate funding. Many people felt we should take nothing if not offered enough.[348]

> We must be gracious to the Jewish Welfare Federation publicly, but we must...be sure that all publicity state explicitly that the grant is...not outright support of the Academy.[349]

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[347] Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the HAI, Inc., 28 August 1986, HHAI. The first allocation to subvent the general budget occurred in 1995 in the amount of $125,000. Hasten, *I Shall Not Die!*, 176.

[348] Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the HAI, Inc., 29 August 1985, HHAI.

[349] Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the HAI, Inc., 21 November 1985, HHAI.

> Fortunately for us, the new leadership of the Federation...appreciates the Academy's success in providing top quality Jewish education for the children of our community...And yet...the Federation still does not help defray the Academy's operating expenses...Now is the time for the Federation to end its history of discrimination against the Hebrew Academy. First it should grant the Academy that status of a beneficiary agency, and second it should contribute a fair share of its operating budget just as it does for the community's after school Hebrew program.[350]

The developments, arguments, perspectives, inconsistencies, and personalities formed a complex, decades-long Academy-versus-Federation debate. It was not simply the size of the check from Federation to HAI, or the line item to which those funds were directed; and it was not simply that the JEA was "communal" or "assimilationist" and the Academy was "private" or "sectarian." So why was there such persistent discontent, and what was at the core of this issue that elicited such visceral reactions from all members of the community? Did Federation leaders harbor a hint of shame at the possibility that the Orthodox community might be "right" in its insistence on the necessity of traditional intensive Jewish education to ensure Jewish continuity? Conversely, could Orthodox leaders actually have feared that including "comparative Judaism" in the curriculum would *not* prove detrimental to the school's ultimate goal, thereby acknowledging the legitimacy and contribution of less observant denominations of Judaism? Was there resentment among Reform, Conservative, and non-affiliated Jews about the Orthodox community's seeming insistence that the good Jew was the observant Jew – when less observant Jews were having meaningful Jewish learning experiences at summer camps, in Israel, and on college campuses, and making significant contributions to the survival of Judaism in America through philanthropy and communal involvement? And how must it have felt to be the minority within a minority, which is convinced it is being

[350] Hart Hasten's column in *The Academy News* (December 1985): 2, HHAI.

"discriminated" against for its attempt to instill a love of and deep commitment to Judaism through intensive Jewish learning, which was the path followed and embraced by generations of Jews for thousands of years.

Historians fifty years from now will have a better view of the tension between these two institutions. But it is worthwhile to recognize that at the heart of the story of the development of Jewish education is a contested debate over what it means to be a Jew and how one should be Jewish in America and in Indianapolis. The profound question here asks what constitutes authentic Jewish identity. The challenge and problem in answering this question is revealed in the tension that emerged and existed between groups within the Indianapolis Jewish community over the past 150 years.

CONCLUSION

This examination of Jewish education in Indianapolis began in the middle of the nineteenth century, when Jews started settling and organizing a community on the city's south side, and concluded in the mid-1980s, when the community's synagogues, agencies, and schools were firmly resettled on the far north side. The forces of continuity and change that affected the development of religious schools created by the Indianapolis Jewish community have been explored, and certain themes consistently appeared. Within the Jewish community, each successive wave of immigrants who settled in Indianapolis grappled with the challenge of American Jewish education: how to reconcile the attraction to assimilate and the need to create a system compatible with American society, while at the same time preserve Jewish individual and communal identity and transmit an authentic culture.[351] Although every immigrant group wrestled with this challenge, each group also created its own response. Mid-nineteenth century German Jewish immigrants embraced assimilation; first generation East European immigrants held tightly to tradition; second generation East European immigrants eagerly integrated; and third and fourth generation Jews were secure enough in their Americanness to rediscover tradition discarded by their parents or grandparents.[352]

In addition to the struggle to calibrate individual and group identification by determining which aspects of Jewishness should be preserved while allowing some level of integration into American society, powerful social forces and events outside the Jewish

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[351] Marshall Sklare, *America's Jews* (New York: Random House, 1971), 159.

[352] Steven M. Cohen and Leonard Fein, "From Integration to Survival: American Jewish Anxieties in Transition," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (July 1985): 75.

community often determined the content and format of Jewish schooling.[353] The first example encountered in this thesis is how the secularization of public schools in the middle of the nineteenth century led to the rise of congregational Sunday schools. The endorsement of free public schools was a fateful decision by German Jewish immigrants; in their desire to accommodate to America, they granted primacy to secular learning and relegated the mastery of Jewish cultural heritage to secondary, extracurricular status.[354]

Clearly, the two million Jews from Eastern Europe and Russia who flooded American shores during the two decades before and after the turn of the twentieth century had the most profound impact on the shape and future of the American Jewish community. For the established and already acculturated Jews, providing the necessary aid for these newcomers elicited the formation of a communal infrastructure of philanthropy, social service, and education that still exists today. In Indianapolis, the National Council of Jewish Women's School in Jewish History for children of poor and unaffiliated immigrants is a clear example of how Americanization was an early goal of Jewish Federation programs and services. The most recent immigrants, however, rejected the Reform Judaism and Sunday school created by first and second generation German Jews. In recognizing the failed attempt to transplant the old world *heder* and *melamed* to the new world, a cadre of East European immigrants, some of whom were trained in American universities, successfully combined their love of Zion and the Hebrew language with notions of cultural pluralism and the modern pedagogic technique *ivrit b'ivrit* to create the afternoon Talmud Torah. In 1911, with the leadership and vision of its founder (Rabbi Neustadt) and first principal (Louis Hurwich), Indianapolis was one

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[353] Michael Zeldin, "Jewish Schools and American Society: Patterns of Action and Reaction," *Religious Education* 78 (Spring 1983): 183.
[354] Sklare, *America's Jews,* 155-158.

of the earliest Jewish communities to successfully establish a modern, communally supported Talmud Torah, known as the United Hebrew Schools. In addition to dynamic and professional leaders, the relatively small size of the Indianapolis Jewish community not only necessitated the pooling of funds to hire qualified educators, but also made it conducive for a manageable single program of afternoon education.

The size of the Indianapolis Jewish community also affected the development of its religious schools during the post-World War II baby boom and suburbanization period. Every city in America was touched by these trends, which, for Jewish communities of all sizes, led to the growth and building of new synagogues and communal agencies in areas of second and third settlement. Unlike in larger communities, however, these social forces did not result in the establishment of afternoon schools attached to the synagogue in Indianapolis, where repeated attempts at creating competing afternoon programs failed. The Indianapolis Jewish community accepted that its size necessitated the communal support of a single afternoon program, the Jewish Educational Association. While the JEA continued its focus on Hebrew education, individual congregations continued to endorse their denominational approach to Judaism in the Sunday school setting.

A consistent theme has been calls for renewed efforts to intensify Jewish education in reaction to newly perceived threats to Jewish continuity, including assimilation, anti-Semitism, the Holocaust, Israel's struggle for survival, the deterioration of black/Christian-Jewish dialogue, and the quickening pace of intermarriage rates. While the Holocaust and founding of the State of Israel translated into an expanded curriculum that included modern Jewish history and Zionism, it was the confluence of

events in the late 1960s and early 1970s that actually had the most profound impact on not only the shape of Jewish education, but also the psyche of American Jewry as a whole. The 1960s witnessed an explosion of Holocaust-related literature, including treatments of America's – specifically, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's – failure to rescue European Jews. At the same time, the weeks of terrorism that preceded the 1967 Six Day War in Israel elicited images of a new Auschwitz.[355] The Israeli victories in 1967 and again in 1973 tapped an unanticipated yet powerful loyalty to the Jewish national homeland and pride in Jewish identification. At home in the United States, after decades of marching alongside blacks in the civil rights movement, Jews were shocked with the rise of black anti-Semitic rhetoric and acts; this, combined with a diminishing confidence in the public school system, led scholars to mark this period as a turning point, for with it, the dominant theme of the American Jewish experience shifted from integration to maintaining Jewish identity and survival.[356] The result was the undeniable growth of the Jewish day school.

Another recurrent theme in the history of Jewish education is the continual derision of Jewish schools by Jewish educators, historians, and sociologists. In every generation, these voices emerged to warn that the continued failure of Jewish schools to create positively identified Jewish youth would effectively doom Jewish existence in America. They decried the lack of communal financial support, low attendance rates, the dearth of any positive reinforcement from parents in the home environment, the paucity of trained teachers and the low teacher salary, poor physical facilities, the inadequacy of secondary level programs for post-bar mitzvah students, and generally, the lip-service

[355] Cohen and Fein, "From Integration to Survival," 80-81.
[356] Ibid., 75, 80-81.

given to Jewish education when it was clear that other obligations merited primacy for communal leaders, rabbis, teachers, and parents.[357] As recently as 1991, the Commission on Jewish Education in North America asserted that:

> The Jewish community of North America is facing a crisis of major proportions. Large numbers of Jews have lost interest in Jewish values, ideals, and behavior... This has grave implications, not only for the richness of Jewish life, but for the very continuity of a large segment of the Jewish people... The responsibility for developing Jewish identity and instilling a commitment to Judaism...now rests primarily with education... Jewish education is not achieving its mission,...leav[ing] many North American Jews indifferent to Judaism, and unwilling or unable to take an active part in Jewish communal living.[358]

And even in the face of rising enrollment numbers and exponential growth of day schools, college courses, and adult educational opportunities, Leonard Fein inveighed:

> Our instinct to celebrate the day schools and the adult education courses...ought to be tempered by the recognition that even the best of the "Jewish Jews," the ones who seek out opportunities and send their kids to the day schools, have a level of Jewish culture that would have been an embarrassment to Tevya in that they are unfamiliar with Jewish texts and the Jewish language and that they are not in any significant sense culturally or seriously religiously Jewish.[359]

Yet for all the failings of the Jewish educational system, it was also endorsed as the only potential salvation for American Jewish continuity. An early 1980s *New York Times* advertisement paid for by the Greater New York Bureau of Jewish Education read: "If you're Jewish, chances are your grandchildren won't be."[360] Positive reflections maintain that Jewish education in America is one of the great success stories of modern Jewish history for its ability to develop and sustain itself in the open and free American

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[357] Arnold Dashefsky, "Jewish Education – For What and For Whom?" *Jewish Education* 53 (Fall 1985): 45.

[358] *A Time To Act: The Report of the Commission on Jewish Education in North America* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991), 15, 31.

[359] Leonard Fein, "The Conversation: Contemporary Jewish Renaissance," *Agenda: Jewish Education* 16 (Summer 2003): 4, JESNA conference panel discussion involving Leonard Fein, Saul Berman, Bethamie Horowitz, Arnold Dashefsky, and Sam Heilman.

[360] Dashefsky, "Jewish Education – For What and For Whom?" 44.

environment.[361] Despite difficulties, two underlying accomplishments were critical in the development of Jewish education in America: the replacement of the *heder* with the afternoon school, a model which flourished until the 1970s; and the phenomenal growth of the day school from fifteen schools in 1930 to over 600 in 1992 "against a backdrop of apathy and even antagonism by the majority of American Jews and Jewish leaders, including the many educators wedded to the idea of the public schools."[362]

While this thesis addressed educational programs within a school setting, there is a broad range of learning environments that exist in the field of Jewish education. Jewish summer camping and experiences in Israel have been applauded as two of the most successful approaches to creating and securing a life-long Jewish identity. As well, national Jewish youth movements have operated since the turn of the twentieth century, and in the past three decades programs at colleges and universities, and extensive adult education curricula sponsored by religious denominations and bureaus of Jewish education have experienced exponential growth.[363] The emergence and development of educational activities outside the elementary religious school classroom have their place within the Indianapolis story, and constitute additional examples of how every generation of American Jews has adjusted the approach to Jewish education in the attempt to address the constant challenge of determining an authentic Jewish identity through the balancing of accommodation and Jewish preservation.

The problem in attempting to meet this challenge is revealed in the tension that emerged and existed between groups within the Jewish community. We saw clashes

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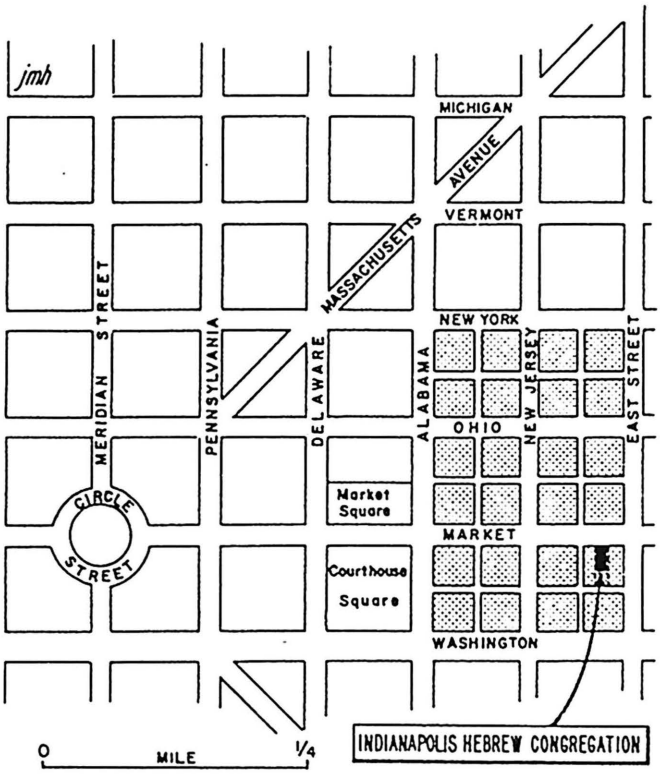
[361] Samuel Schafler, "Observations on the History of Jewish Education in the United States," *Jewish Education* 49 (Fall 1981): 18; Alvin Schiff, "Thoughts on the Past, Present and Future," *Jewish Education* 60 (Summer 1993): 46.
[362] Schiff, "Thoughts on the Past, Present and Future," 45.
[363] *A Time To Act*, 31.

between immigrant and native Jews, between Ashkenazim and Sephardim, and between Reform and Orthodox Jews. We saw conflict between those immigrants trying to preserve as much of the old world identity as possible and established Jews working toward integration through a host of Americanization programs and classes. We saw resistance from some of those same immigrants as they begrudgingly accepted the replacement of the *heder* and *melamed* with a modern and uniquely American approach to communal Jewish education, and then we saw how the United Hebrew Schools struggled to maintain support throughout the Orthodox community after the death of its founder, Rabbi Neustadt. We saw resentment on the part of some members of the Orthodox community when the Federation assumed control of the Jewish Educational Association. We saw factionalism as north side synagogues competed to secure more congregants and expand and improve supplementary religious school programs. And we saw the tension clearly come to a head in the relationship between the Hebrew Academy and the Jewish Federation.

All of these dynamics reflect how every immigrant group and every generation of Jews – not only in Indianapolis, but throughout America and arguably throughout the world – has grappled with the question of defining Jewishness. Different groups at different times and in different places have naturally answered the question differently. No matter the year, location, or where along the trajectory of integration an individual or group might have been, the approach taken by a congregation or the community to educating its Jewish youth is a direct reflection of the attempt to effectively answer this question.

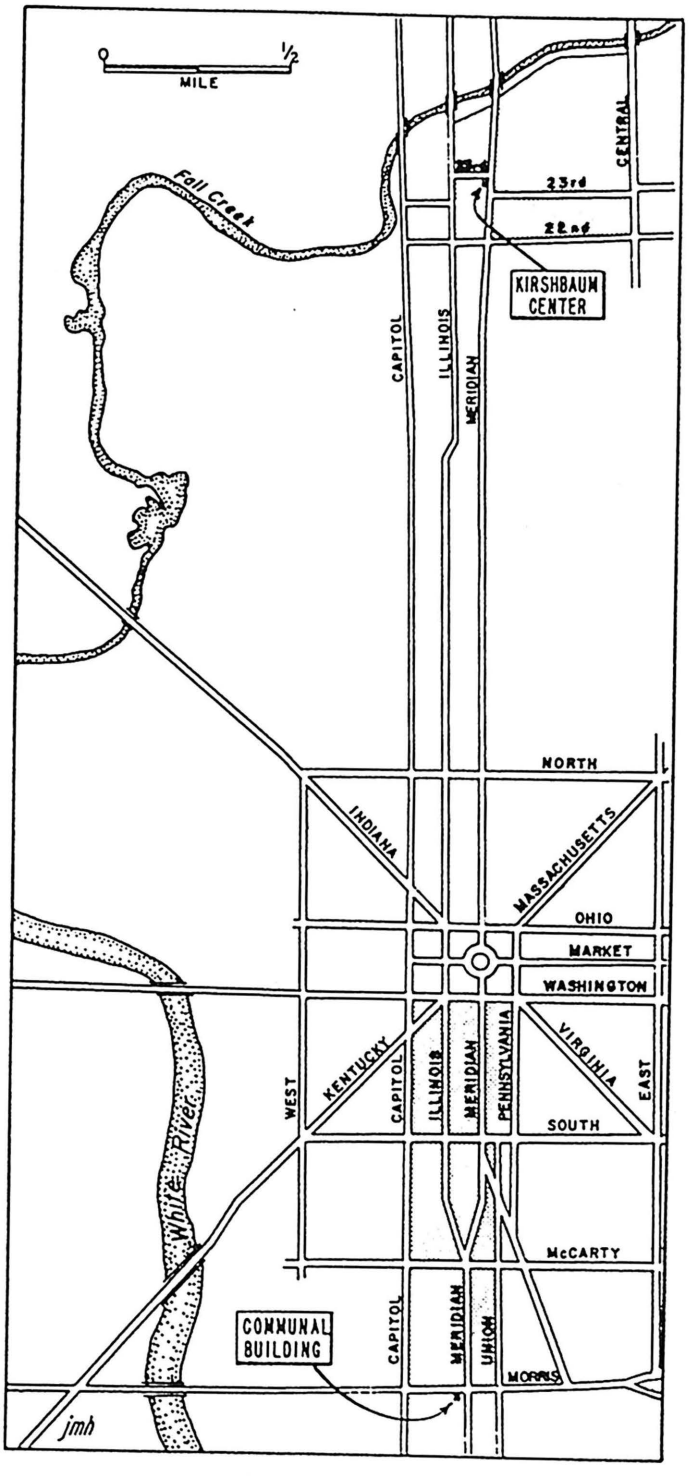
For over 350 years Jews in America have struggled with this challenge; and for Jews in Indianapolis, this was no less true. Although this struggle has been a constant, the approach to its resolution has changed. Key words and terms used by Jewish communal leaders over the last century speak to the shifts that have taken place in negotiating the relationship with what has proved to be the most hospitable host society in which Diaspora Jews have ever lived: Americanization, pluralism, integration, survival, continuity, identity, and the call in recent years for Jewish meaning (to combat indifference).[364] As events unfold and history is written every day, the themes of continuity and change will continue to evolve and frame the story of not only Jewish education in Indianapolis, but also American Jewry as a whole. There is no doubt that Jewish education will continue to be an important lens through which the American Jewish experience will be studied, and questions surrounding the shaping of Jewish identity – particularly an American Jewish identity – will continue to drive the approach to and direction of Jewish education in the future, just as it did during the past 150 years of Jewish life in Indianapolis.

[364] Rabbi Saul Berman, "Beyond Continuity: A Vision for the Future," and Bethamie Horowitz, "Connections and Journeys: New Findings on Jewish Identity Development," in *Beyond "Continuity" – Taking the Next Steps: A Handbook for Jewish Renaissance and Renewal,* (New York: Jewish Education Service of North America (JESNA), 2000), 9-18.



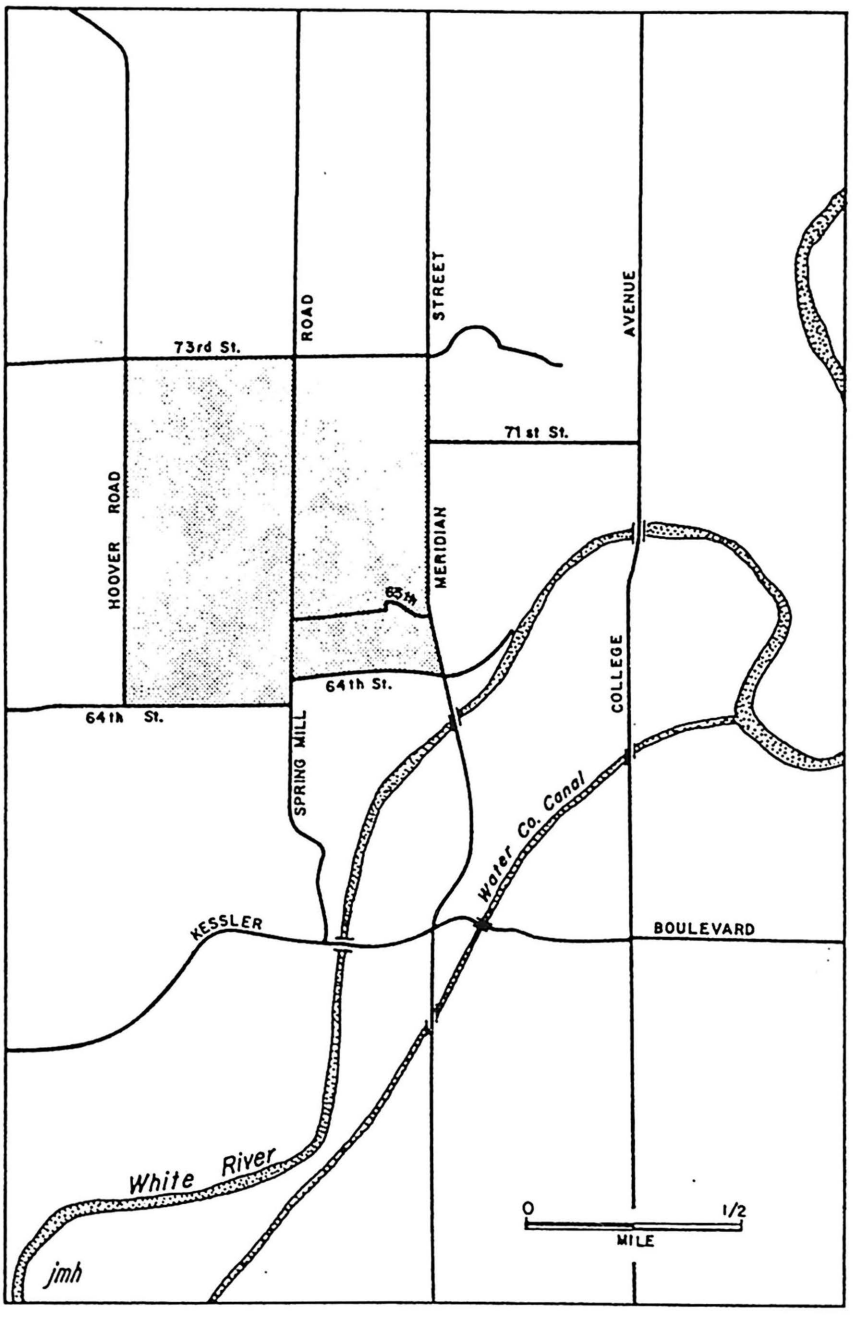
Map 1: 1860s

Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 30.



Map 2: 1920s

Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 115.



Map 3: 1970s–1980s

Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 242.

GLOSSARY*

Ashkenazim – Jews of Central, Northern, and Eastern European origins.

Bar Mitzvah – Hebrew: "son of the commandment"; the ceremony at which a thirteen-year-old boy becomes an adult member of the community and is henceforth obligated to perform the commandments.

Bat Mitzvah – Hebrew: "daughter of the commandment"; feminine for *bar mitzvah*.

Cantor – Chanter.

Daven – Yiddish: common word among *Ashkenazim* meaning "to pray."

Halachah – Jewish law.

Haskalah – Movement for Jewish Enlightenment which arose in Germany and Eastern Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Heder, Hadarim (plural) – Hebrew: "room"; popularly applied to an elementary religious school of the type prevalent in Eastern Europe, often situated in a singe room in the teachers' home.

Ivrit b'Ivrit – Hebrew: "Hebrew by Hebrew"; Hebrew teaching method.

Kiddush – Prayer and ritual ushering in the Sabbath or a festival.

Kashrut – Jewish dietary laws.

Landsman, Landsleyt (plural) – Group of people from the same town or region in Europe.

Landsmanshaftn – Fraternal societies of Jews from the same town or region in Europe.

Maskil, Maskilim (plural) – Followers of the Jewish Enlightenment; learned man.

Melamed, Melamdim (plural) – Hebrew: Teacher, usually of younger children.

Mohel – Official who performs the ritual circumcision.

Sephardim – Jews of Spanish, North African, and Middle Eastern origins.

Shtetl – Yiddish: Eastern European Jewish town.

Shul – Yiddish: synagogue.

Sukkah – Booth used at Sukkot.

Sukkot – Feast of Booths or Tabernacles.

Synagogue – Place of worship.

Talmud – compilation of the legal discussions based on the *Mishnah* (Oral Torah/Law).

Talmud Torah – Hebrew: "study of Torah"; developed as a term for the place where education, particularly of an elementary nature, was provided. The Talmud Torah was often a community-supported school.

Torah – Law (Pentateuch).

Yeshivah, Yeshivot (plural) – Talmudic college or rabbinical seminary.

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* Glossary citations: Dan Cohen-Sherbok, *The Jewish Faith*, 238-245; Endelman, *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, 293-294; David J. Goldberg and John D. Drayner, *The Jewish People: Their History and Their Religion* (London, Eng.: Penguin Books, 1987), 383-384.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

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EDUCATION:

2005	Indiana University, Indianapolis, M.A., Public History.
1998	Indiana University, Bloomington, B.A., History and Jewish Studies.
1996-1997	The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Junior Year Abroad, Advanced Jewish Studies Specialization Program.

ACADEMIC HONORS AND DISTINCTIONS:

- Graduated with High Distinction from the College of Arts and Sciences and with Departmental Honors from the Department of History (GPA: 3.86/3.93), 1998
- Phi Beta Kappa, 1997
- Piser Prize to the Outstanding Graduating Student in Jewish Studies, 1997-1998
- Honor Division's Senior Achievement Award, 1997-1998
- Golden Key National Honor Society, 1997
- Listenfelt Memorial Scholarship in Outstanding Academic Achievement in History, 1997
- Levin Scholarship to attend The Hebrew University in Jerusalem, 1996-1997
- Goldsmith Foundation Academic Achievement Award for Overseas Study, 1996-1997
- Founder's Day Recognition in High Scholastic Achievement, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998

RESEARCH AND TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

Fall 2000: Grader for Modern Jewish History course at Indiana University.
1999-2000: Hebrew Teacher at the Indianapolis Bureau of Jewish Education.
1997-1998: Research Intern for Jewish Studies Program faculty at Indiana University.
1995-1996: Supplemental Instructor for U.S. History at Indiana University.
1994-1995: Holocaust educator at South Bend area high schools.

PUBLICATIONS:

- "A Century of Jewish Education in Indianapolis: 1860-1960." *Indiana Jewish History* 35 (July 2003): 11-39.
- "The Journey from Judaea: Reflections of Jewish History in the Indiana University Art Museum." Indiana University Art Museum Exhibition Guide, 1998.

THESIS AND MAJOR PAPERS:

- "Anglo-Jewry and the Absorption of East European Jewish Immigrants in London: 1881-1905." Undergraduate Honors Thesis in History and Jewish Studies, 1998.
- "The Russian-Jewish Avant-Garde: 1910-1925." Written for Professor Janet Kennedy in course entitled: Twentieth Century Art, 1997.
- "Simon Dubnow: Synthesizer of Jewish History, Nationality, and Ideology." Written for Professor Israel Bartal at The Hebrew University in Jerusalem in course entitled: Jewish Messianism: From Emancipation to Nationalism; also submitted to Professor

Paul Mendes-Flohr for graduate seminar entitled: The Place of History in Modern Jewish Thought, 1997.

- "The Musar Literature of 18th and 19th Century Europe: Proponent and Opponent of the Haskalah." Written for Professor Michael Silber at The Hebrew University in Jerusalem in course entitled: The History of Orthodoxy, 1996.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

- Director of Government Affairs, Jewish Community Relations Council, Indianapolis. August 2002 – Present.
- Cornelius O'Brien Intern, Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, Indianapolis. January – May 2002.
- Cornelius O'Brien Intern, Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, Department of Natural Resources, Indianapolis, Indiana. September – December 2001.
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